

# Perceived Experiences of Persons with Visual Impairment who have transitioned from School into Work

## *A Case Study of Five Persons with Visual Impairment that have Remunerable Employment*

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Master's Thesis

Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education  
Department of Special Needs Education  
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# Abstract

Unemployment of Persons with Visual Impairment (PWVI) remains a significant challenge for them in Uganda. Whereas education is regarded as a key pillar in any transition process, this doesn't seem to be the case for PWVI. The fact that there have been many PWVI that have undergone school, their number in the employment sector has not been commensurately reflected. There seems to be a number of gaps that needed to be addressed so that more PWVI are absorbed into the formal employment sector after school, where they are guaranteed a salary.

This study therefore tried to explore perceived experiences of Persons with Visual Impairment who had transitioned from school into work. By selecting PWVI who had broken through the barriers of transitioning to be the focus of this study, it was envisaged that the findings would inspire more PWVI that are still undergoing the process of transition to positively encounter the barriers of transition and as a result attain employment.

In order to capture experiences of PWVI who had transitioned from school into employment, a single case study design following a qualitative approach was carried out on five embedded cases with Visual Impairment (VI). Three of the cases were female, and the other 2 were male. Interview was the exclusive method for collecting data. Hermeneutics was used to analyse the obtained data. The data obtained were presented in tabular form where they were coded and sub-categories were formed out of the codes. Sub-categories were later condensed into categories that served as the basis for discussing the findings.

The findings revealed that PWVI encountered a number of barriers in their transition efforts from school into work which ranged from negative attitudes, lack of operational employment policies, limited work experience, low self esteem amongst PWVI themselves, and limited choices of jobs among others.

On the other hand, the study discovered that PWVI that were able to make it through transition from school into remunerable employment banked on a number of factors too. These included having an inclusive driven mindset in all their transition efforts, being focused on their studies, maintaining their self esteem, ensuring good inter-personal relationships, being quick to adapt to new situations, and ensuring that they gained work experience before entering their jobs among other factors.

In the main discussion for this study, the Enrichment Theory was used as the basis for discussing the findings. The Enrichment Theory was however not used exclusively. Other theories were also used in the discussion too. In the discussion though, three core aspects of the Enrichment Theory were emphasised. The first was the emphasis of the theory that all persons are free to interact, regardless of their distinctive features. This implies that PWVI, regardless of their loss of sight have the right to attain employment in the field they have qualified for. The second was the assertion by the theory that when right conditions are provided to persons who are vulnerable, ideal conditions for everybody else will also be guaranteed. And thirdly, it was for the fact that the theory aims at looking at individual differences as strengths, rather than as challenges. This therefore strengthened the opportunity for this study to look at how the barriers in the transition process of PWVI were coped with.

In conclusion, this study drew the attention of the reader by putting forward some recommendations and suggestions both for future action and for future studies. Some of the suggestions for future action included, improvement in the teaching of Mathematics to PWVI, ensuring transition planning for PWVI in schools, and ensuring that PWVI are equipped with modern technological skills that would help them in work, among others. In addition, suggestions for future studies were also made. These included carrying out a more comprehensive study using mixed methods so that the findings can be generalised.

# Dedication

To my parents Mr. and Mrs. Lubega-Nsumikambi for their unceasing care and love while bringing me up and also to my grandparents who nurtured them in the first place.

Dedication also goes to my wife Josephine Nakanyike for enduring my absence and for her care, understanding, and moral support and also to my son Mark Dan Bukenya Nsumikambi who missed me too.

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# Foreword

Regarding this Master's Thesis done was one of the hardest decisions to make although it had to be done at one point in time, because even the longest snake must have a tail! There were always challenges that emerged from here and there and were always slowing down the progress of writing. The challenges I encountered confirmed my earlier theoretical knowledge about research as being a tedious and demanding process. The extent to which it was tedious and demanding could not be easily imagined especially in the infancy stages, not until I had gone deep into the actual writing. There was always something new to write every day and this would mean changing a number of aspects too. I say thank you to the Lord for enabling me to accomplish this task.

However, I would like to acknowledge that this was not a one-man show. A number of individuals and institutions have played different roles that have enabled me to realise this goal, and therefore I would like to acknowledge their input too.

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To all my lecturers in the department of Special Needs Studies, I appreciate all your efforts and hope to use the experiences shared for the betterment of the field of special needs education. To Denese the administrator at the department of Special Needs and to Lynn and Michele at the International office, I say thanks a lot.

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# **CHAPTER 1: Introduction and general background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This study focuses on perceived experiences of Persons with Visual Impairment (PWVI) who have transited from school into work. However, it is important for the reader to know how the terms used in this study were defined. Operationalising definitions of terms is in line with Goodwin (2005) who cited Brigman, (1927) who argued that a terminology in Science must be objective, precise, and defined in terms of the operations for which it is intended to perform. Therefore apart from the literature meaning, terminologies in this study were also defined in the context of this study.

The term experiences as it appears in the research topic and research question could be defined in several ways. According to Barnhart, (1988), experience is “What happens to a person; what is seen, done, felt, or lived through.” (P. 749). In line with the above definition, I used the term experience to imply all activities undertaken by PWVI in the period of transitioning from school that affect their attainment of employment.

The term transition is also used in this study. By ordinary definition, transition can be defined in terms of physical maturation to adulthood (Mason, McCall, Arter, McLinden, and Stone, 2001). However, according to the Office for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Centre for Education and Research Innovation ([OECD/CERI], 1986), transition from school into work means much more than physical maturation. The term transition implies a social process and comprises four key areas. The first is personal autonomy and independence from the control of parents. Second is economic self-sufficiency that is usually through employment. Thirdly, it involves taking up new roles within and beyond the family, and fourthly playing an active role as a member in society with legal rights, responsibilities and access to resources. As for the World Bank (2007), school to work transition is defined as the critical social-economic life-changing period of approximately 15- 24 years as youths develop and build skills using the attained education so as to become productive members of society.

In this study however, I used the term transition to refer to the process of movement from school into work by Persons with Visual Impairment (PWVI) of eighteen years and above in preparation for becoming productive members of society.

On the other hand, it should be noted that understanding definitions of Visual Impairment is important in facilitating the development the right educational programme (Gargiulo, 2009). It is for such a reason that I endeavoured to explain the term Visual Impairment so as to understand the phenomenon of transition from school into work in the context of PWVI.

Different writers bring different definitions of the term visual impairment forward. Sacks and Silberman, (1998) for instance define visual impairment as a range of visual losses that require adaptations for learning in a variety of environments. They assert that this includes blindness as well as other degrees of visual impairment. In their perspective, the term visual impairment covers a spectrum of deficits affecting the sense of vision.

This definition is in consonance with the International Classification of Diseases-10 (ICD-10). According to ICD-10, visual functioning has four categories namely: normal vision, moderate visual impairment, severe Visual Impairment, and blindness. ICD-10 further explains that both moderate and severe Visual Impairment are categorised under low vision, while blindness stands out distinctively as the most severe category of Visual Impairment as it hinders people from moving around unaided.

For Gargiulo, (2009) Visual Impairment is a term that describes people who cannot see well even with correction. He further argues that among these definitions is the term “legally blind,” which is a federal definition of blindness and entails the use of a Snellen chart (See Appendix 7). This is a clinical measurement of the true amount of distance vision an individual has under given conditions. Legal blindness is a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correction or a visual field that is no greater than 20 degrees (P 449). In this definition, Gargiulo further explains that the 20 feet, equivalent to 6 metres, is the distance at which vision is measured. The 200 indicates the distance in feet equivalent to 60 metres that a person with normal vision would be able to identify the largest symbol on the eye chart.

The Snellen chart was originally developed by a Dutch Ophthalmologist Herman Snellen in (1862), to estimate visual acuity. The ‘E’ on line one of this Chart should measure 88.7 mm



(3.5 inches) tall when printed out and when viewed at a distance of 20 feet, (609.6 centimetres or 6.09600 metres, you can estimate your eye sight based on the smallest line you can read (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Disabled World (2007) on the other hand explains visual acuity as the acuteness or clearness of vision. They explain that the mapping of legal blindness as 20/200 or 6/60 means that a person who is legally blind is able to see detail from 20 feet away, the same as what a person with normal eye sight could see from 200 feet away. In other words, a legally blind person will see detail in 6 metres that an ordinary person with normal sight can see from 60 metres. In this study therefore, the term Visual Impairment is used in reference to persons with legal blindness and those that are totally blind.

With the key terms in the study defined, it is important to bring to the attention of the reader that while there seems to be a lot of publicity about education of Persons with Disabilities (PWD's) in Uganda, it seems not much attention has been paid to their destiny after school. There seems to be a number of challenges facing the attainment of gainful employment of PWVI in Uganda. This scenario contributed to my zeal for establishing what transpires in the course of attaining employment for PWVI. It was therefore important to find out perceived experiences of those PWVI who had transitioned from school into work.

At this juncture too, it is also important for the reader to know what a disability is. A disability is defined by the International Classification of Functioning (ICF), (2001) as an umbrella term that comprises problems in body functioning or alterations in the body structure (Impairments), difficulties in executing activities (Activity Limitations), problems with involvement in any area of life (Participation restrictions), as well as personal and environmental barriers. This therefore qualifies PWVI as part of the big group of PWD's who have impairments in the use of the sense of vision.

I therefore sought views from PWVI that had been in school and had attained employment. The account of their experiences given would thus help this study to establish what goes on during the process of transition from school and what it takes for a PWVI to attain gainful employment.

Specifically, positive factors that could make the process of transition from school into work a smoother and possible one would be important to note as points of reference for professionals,

and policy makers who provide services in the transition of PWVI. These positive aspects would also be used by other PWVI as points of reference for consideration while making their transition efforts from school into work as a way of making the process a better one.

Basing on my ten year experience of working with PWVI, not much progress had been noted in the attainment of gainful employment by PWVI after school. In addition, studies conducted in the field of Special Needs seem to show that even when PWD's have got the academic qualifications, they still stand a risk of not attaining employment. In order therefore to have some insight about the process of transition from school into work of PWVI, this study aimed at studying perceived experiences of those PWVI that had transited from school into work so that good practices could be learnt as a measure of making the process of transition a smoother one.

In Chapter One, a number of aspects are presented. These include the introduction of the study, and the Background information of the study that aimed at giving the reader the roots of the problem of transitioning from school into work of PWVI. In addition, justification for carrying out this study was presented too. The Statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the key research question and the scope of the study respectively, were presented.

## **1.2 Background**

One of the most important aspects in Special Needs Education in Uganda that has not got much attention is the process of transition from school into work. Yet as noted in the definition that transition from one step into another in any individual's life is a major landmark for every individual, it seems to be more unrealistic for PWVI to transit from school into work. For many PWVI, this is a hard step to realise as there are usually a number of factors that could foster or hinder this process.

One of the motivating factors for carrying out this study was triggered by my ten year experience in the teaching profession particularly in the field of Special Needs Education. Over the years, working with children and adults with disabilities in addition to training teachers, I developed interest in finding out how PWVI go through the process of transition from school into work.

In addition to the above factor, literature from a number of writers indicates that the transition process of PWD's and in particular for PWVI is a great challenge. An example is a study by Myen, & Skrtic, (1998) which reflected that improved performance in classroom related tasks no longer satisfied those in the field of Special Needs Education. Myen, et al. further argue that what children are taught in schools should have a tangible positive impact on the lives of learners with special educational needs in order to ensure a smooth adjustment into adult life in the community. This means that what is learnt in school ought to be translated into use after school especially with reference to attaining employment as part of a process to independent living for a PWVI.

Whereas the forces of education assert that those with higher levels of educational attainment stand higher chances of attaining employment (Smith and McCoy, 1999; Lynch, 1989), the assertion seems not to be in favour of PWD's and in particular those with visual impairment in Uganda. The researcher's personal experience showed that a number of PWD's who had been taught and had good records of work at school still had an uncertain destiny in terms of their employment prospects after school. Particularly, it was noted that not many of them were having employment in the formal public sector where they are guaranteed a salary. There seems to be other factors influencing the attainment of employment for PWD's apart from education.

The above state of vulnerability for PWVI in Uganda can be re-affirmed by the fact that whereas their education took precedence over that of other PWD's, since their first school was established in 1955 before any school for other PWD's (Matovu, 2005), PWVI have continued to encounter numerous challenges that have limited their chances of attaining employment.

While there seems to be agreement from some writers like Schunk, (2000), who asserts that transitions are generally difficult for all persons with or without disabilities, PWD's of which group PWVI are inclusive are said to be experiencing more challenges in their efforts of attaining employment after school compared to their colleagues without disabilities ("No Boarders: Hiring the Disabled can still get you the results," 2012). With such a situation at hand, it was deemed important to carry out a study to obtain experiences PWVI go through in order to attain employment.

### **1.3 Justification for selection of the topic**

Basing on the background given above, there seems to be a number of gaps in many aspects in the transition process of PWVI that need to be addressed. The fact that PWVI have been accorded education hitherto, yet there are still few results in terms employability, poses a number of questions that need to be addressed. Perhaps, the compatibility of the knowledge, skills, and values that PWVI attain in schools in relation to employment or work expectations may not be complementary.

In addition, it should be noted that whereas there are policies regulating employment of PWD's, guarding them against all forms of discrimination say in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, (1995) where Article 35 Section 1 provides that "PWD's have a right to respect and human dignity and the state and society shall take appropriate measures to ensure that they realise their full mental and physical potential," it is evident that such policies need to be more operationalised. For instance, while such a provision exists, it seems not much has been done to ensure that PWVI realise their full potential in terms of attaining gainful employment after school.

In addition, the economic shift from government to the private sector following the privatisation of most government parastatals, government seems to have left the employment of her people in the hands of the private sector. Government is not the key source of employment. It seems there are great gaps in terms of what the policies provide for and what actually takes place in practice. This is one reason this study was carried out in order to find answers to these gaps. In the next section, the statement of the research problem is presented.

### **1.4 Statement of the problem**

Experience has shown that many PWVI do not easily transit from school into work despite all initiatives that Government, Non Government Organisations (NGO's), and individuals have undertaken in Uganda hitherto. Several Policies have been drafted and endorsed to ensure employment for PWD's, a category that includes PWVI, albeit the practice of it all has not been fully reflected in the area of employment.

This study therefore embarked on finding out perceived experiences by PWVI who had transited from school into work. The gaps discovered in terms of perceived experiences would

then be used as opportunities to ensure that the process of transition is made smoother for PWVI. In addition, the coping strategies that will be provided by those that have experienced the transition process would be used as sources for further support.

## **1.5 Research question**

The following Research Question was set to guide this study;

**“What are the Perceived Experiences of Persons with Visual Impairment who have transitioned from school into work?”**

In order to capture all experiences of PWVI who had transitioned from school into work, objectives were set to guide the study towards finding answers to the key Research Question.

## **1.6 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study were:

- To establish factors that can contribute towards transition from school into work for PWVI.
- To find out barriers PWVI encounter during the process of transitioning from school to work.
- To obtain suggestions from employed PWVI about some of the helpful approaches of entering into a job after school

## **1.7 Scope of the study**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that world over; PWD's comprised 10% of the world's population with reports from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) putting this percentage at an estimated 650 million people. Out of these, 80% live in developing countries. The World Health Organisation ([WHO], 2011) estimated that 285 million people had visual impairment worldwide of whom 39 million people were totally

blind and 246 million had low vision. A total of 90% of the world Persons with Visual Impairment were said to be living in developing countries of which Uganda is part.

The Uganda National Household Survey, (2005/2006) for instance estimated that 7.2 % approximately 2.5 million people had a disability. This poses a big challenge in Uganda in that traditionally, PWD's are regarded as unproductive members of society due to the negative attitudes that society holds and were still encountering a number of challenges particularly towards attaining employment (Baguwemu, Ddamulira, and Matovu, 2008).

Out of this big theme of transition of PWD's however, I further chose a group of PWD's that seemed to be facing even more challenges in their transition and these were PWVI. First, the inadequacies and discrepancies in the reporting, registration, and definition of blindness (Ssentumbwe and Kahrs, 2001), have played a great role in the neglect of PWVI. In addition, the fact that most activities in the transition process require the use of sight may be another reason they are more vulnerable than other PWD's. Mange and Elmerskog, (2001), for instance noted that PWVI in Uganda were faced with a number of challenges stemming from biases among ordinary people presumably without disabilities. This scenario has thus led to a number of efforts from the international and national organisations and individuals to try to avert this pathetic situation.

This study was carried out in three districts of Uganda in the central region. The country is divided into over 112 districts that are in four regions. These are Eastern, Central, Northern, and Southern (See Appendix 1). The number of districts however, keeps changing every day that goes by as many more districts are being created. Having said that however, this study mainly focused on the central region in three districts that were herein not mentioned in order to maximise confidentiality. This is in line with the methodological knowledge advanced by Gall et al. (2007) who argue that a good ethical rule to follow is to minimise the number of people who know the identity of the research participants (p 85). Gall et al. emphasise that confidentiality ought to be protected by not identifying the respondents by neither their name nor locations in any publications resulting from a research project. The above statement justifies why the selected districts were not mentioned. These districts were selected because they were better accessible to me. I also envisaged that the respondents selected from this region would be in position to have interviews conducted in English without any problem.

## **1.8 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis was built up in a way that in Chapter 1, I gave an introduction to the study and this entailed defining and operationalising the key concepts in the research topic and the research question. Other terms were defined as the study progressed. Chapter 1 also provided a justification for carrying out the study, the scope, statement of the problem, research question, objectives for the study and the scope.

In Chapter 2, I embarked on giving a theoretical framework for the study by presenting what other writers had written about the phenomenon of transition. Previous studies, political documents at both the national and international levels were also consulted. This was followed by Chapter three which presented the methodology of how the whole study was carried out. The methodology chapter was followed by Chapter 4 where the findings of the study were presented and analysed by coding the data, putting it into sub-categories and later into categories. I used the categories as the basis for discussing the findings in Chapter 5 which is the last chapter where I presented the main discussion, recommendations and the concluding remarks.

In the next chapter, I made efforts to present what other authors had written and shared about the phenomenon “transition,” in general terms, and in the disability perspective with particular reference to PWVI who were the focus of this study.





# **CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework**

## **2.1 Introduction**

As earlier stated in Chapter 1, the gist of this study was to explore perceived experiences that PWVI encountered in their transition from school into work. In order to find out their experiences, it was necessary for me to examine literature, legal frameworks and provisions at both international and national levels taking into account what other writers had written in relation to transition from school into work of PWVI. This included examining previous studies, theories related to the study, as well as presenting personal reflections basing on the literature.

This chapter was built up in the following way. First was a section that presented an account of what it means to be a PWVI in Uganda. In the second section, the concept of transition which entailed barriers to transition and planning for transition were presented. The last section in this chapter presented what other writers had said concerning help needed in the transition from school into work for PWVI.

## **2.2 Being a Person with Visual Impairment in Uganda**

Since time immemorial, issues of disability in Uganda have had mixed views from different groups of people in terms of beliefs, customs, and myths. Matovu, (2005) reckons that many people had a belief that witches, ancestral spirits and angry gods caused illness and disabilities, including Visual Impairment as a way to avenge on those who annoy them. As such, a section of some people became sympathetic to PWD's and ended up overprotecting them say by limiting their participation while others looked at them as a curse and therefore hid them away from public view.

However, literature from the medical field indicates that visual impairment in Uganda is caused by other factors with no connection with the traditional beliefs cited above. Waddell (1998) accounted for the causes of visual impairment and noted that cataract was responsible for the cause of 30.7% of Visual Impairment and was the leading cause. It was attributed to having links with hereditary causes. In addition to cataract, corneal ulceration with a percentage of 22.0% that has roots in postnatal causes was cited too. Another cause noted was glaucoma at 6.1% with hereditary traits being the leading influence.

On the other hand however, Mange and Elmerskog, (2001) acknowledge that although there was widespread traditional belief that the Blind were cursed because of sin or that they were bewitched, this belief was strengthened by some practical reasons that may have contributed to the limitation of PWVI in their participation in activities in their environment. They assert that the fear of being injured or getting lost may have caused the limitation in participation and as such taking a great toll on the general development of a PWVI. Many PWVI were thus hidden away from the public. Matovu (2005) recounts that for PWVI that survived these harsh circumstances, society still exhibited negative attitudes towards them usually associating them with stereotypic behaviours of being beggars and a burden to the community. Matovu further notes that more often than not, many marriages broke up because of the male generated myth that women were responsible for causing disabilities and as such most PWVI grew up in broken families. The implication of such a situation is that it makes PWVI more vulnerable in terms of their development particularly their self esteem, and ultimately affecting their ability to experience a smooth process of transition from school into work.

The coming of European Missionaries in Uganda in (1887) could have made a turning point in the plight of PWD's in general and PWVI in particular. Evidently, there was remarkable improvement in the lives of PWVI, although literature doesn't suggest any outstanding provision of education to PWD's to coincide with the coming of missionaries. There could have been other benefits in terms of the improved medical care that was brought along with the missionaries. The provision of education was initially only limited to the children of chiefs and influential families who were assumed that sooner than later would hold positions of responsibility in society (Ojijo, 2012). This was further complicated by the little or no funding of education by the then protectorate government which had feared that the Africans would use the knowledge gained through schooling to rebel against their rule (Mino, 2011). Therefore, education was in the meantime left in the hands of missionaries who had meager resources. With such a situation therefore, PWVI had limited chances of having education because of the restrictions in the provision of education, limited funding, coupled with the negative attitudes towards PWD's in general.

A brief historical account of Special Needs Education in Uganda by Matovu, (2005) for instance indicated that education of the Blind in Uganda registered a major landmark following an initiative by Sir. Andrew Cohen, the then colonial Governor in (1952) who had a

blind relative and lobbied the British Empire Society to start a branch in Uganda. On accomplishment of this task, and a branch was establishment in Uganda with a fund for the promotion of welfare, education, and the provision of jobs to PWVI in Uganda. Matovu further notes that the resultant factor for these developments was the enactment of the Uganda Foundation of the Blind (UFB) Ordinance (Act) in (1954) by the Protectorate Government Legislature. This resulted into the establishment of the first school for the Blind at Madera in Eastern Uganda by (1955) with support from the Teso District Education Committee, the Ministry of Education, and the Uganda Foundation of the Blind. This was the first stride in the education of PWVI in Uganda. This led to the development of education for PWVI over the years and the establishment of more schools for the blind like in Iganga and other parts of Uganda.

These efforts have been in the recent past further boosted by government position on the provision of education to her people. Government of Uganda recognised Education for All and this stand resulted in the launch of Universal Primary Education (UPE) on 1<sup>st</sup> January, (1997), hence opening up immense opportunities for free primary education for four children per family is another major landmark too. Under this provision, there was a provision asserting that out of the four children in the family, the first priority would benefit a child with disability in case there was one in the family, followed by a girl child. The remaining children in the family to benefit from this provision were assumed to have no disabilities/ barriers to learning, development and participation (Universal Primary Education Policy, 1997). This enabled many PWD's that were earlier unable to access education to do so. With such improved access to education, there was a notion that the lives of PWD's including those with Visual Impairment would be improved upon in return.

Consistent with these National trends, the enactment of the Persons with Disability Act, (2006) was also another major landmark in ensuring that PWD's receive well co-ordinated education aimed at attaining work after school, further education and independent living. Article 11 of The Persons with Disability Act, (2006) for instance provides that government shall take vocational rehabilitation measures to develop the skills and potentials of PWD's to enable them compete favourably for available productive and remunerable employment in the labour market. PWVI were supposed to benefit from such supportive legal frameworks too.

Further National Policy developments also included Affirmative Action. According to the dictionary meaning, Affirmative Action is "The practice of choosing people for a job or

college, who are treated unfairly” (Fox, 2003 p 25). As for the National Policy on Disability, (2006), Affirmative Action is a positive action that favours PWD’s with the aim of uplifting them from their vulnerable situation to a better one. In Uganda, Affirmative Action has been adopted in some policies too. The Income Tax (amendment) Act, (2008) in Section 22 (1) (e) provides that; “Private employers who employ ten or more Persons with Disabilities either as regular employees, apprentices or learners on full time basis shall be entitled to a tax deduction of fifteen percent of all payable tax upon proof to the Uganda Revenue Authority.”

One wonders however why PWD’s are still encountering numerous challenges entering remunerable employment even after such waivers have been provided. A study by Baguwemu et al. (2008) carried out in Uganda confirmed indeed that PWD’s were still encountering numerous challenges in entering a job despite all the concerted efforts from different individuals and organisations. Results from their study indicated that employers were reluctant towards employing PWD’s due to the fear of incurring extra costs of adapting their workplaces to suit their needs. Although this statement was general in nature, referring to all PWD’s, PWVI in particular could be most affected. In addition, findings by the same study by Baguwemu, et al. (2008) indicated that the fact that employers were doubtful about the capabilities of PWD’s towards meeting the job requirements. They had no idea that PWD’s were able to execute given job tasks.

Another study carried out in Uganda by Mange, et al. (2001) which looked at Mobility and Rehabilitation Programmes for PWVI reported for instance that in terms of academic and professional qualifications, there were still very few PWVI in Uganda who had access to participate in the limited education and rehabilitation programmes available. Their study further reported that there was a great proportion of illiteracy among PWVI compared to the general population. This kind of situation seems to be a great contributing factor in terms of disadvantaging them when it comes to competing for jobs in the formal sector, more so to the employers’ attitudes of lack of knowledge about the capabilities of PWVI as was noted by Baguwemu et al. (2008).

A similar situation like that one in Uganda was also revealed by a study in the United States of America by McBroom, Crudden, Skinner, and Moore, (1998) who revealed that PWVI are most likely to incur more difficulties towards attaining employment than the other PWD’s. McBroom et al. (1998) cited Moore and Wolffe, (1997) who observed that a number of barriers were responsible for eliminating PWVI from attaining employment citing negative

attitudes of employers towards PWVI as one of the major barriers. These findings are in accord with Baguwemu et al. (2008) who also noted this as well. In Uganda, employment of PWVI in the formal sector which Baguwemu et al. (2008) recommend as the better choice for PWD's seems to be even more difficult to realise. In the same study by Baguwemu, et al. (2008), it was observed that formal employment assures PWD's of regular income and protects them from the disadvantages associated with the informal sector, where by the informal sector was reported to be susceptible to the forces in the labour market that might not favour PWVI.

However, another study by Mange et al. (2001) reported that in terms of employment, PWVI enter a job already disadvantaged by technical and cultural factors. As such, PWVI find it easier to cope with the challenges of attaining employment in the informal employment sector say in crafts making, small businesses, and in simple routine work like in factories than it is in the formal sector.

There is hope however, that through concerted efforts by Government, Non Government Organisations (NGO's), and Individuals, the plight of PWVI is reportedly changing for the better although some constraints in terms of attaining equal opportunities in the formal employment sector are still wanting. There has been continuous sensitisation of the public through different media about the potentials of PWVI by citing various role models in different reputable positions in society. Improved access to education and is another step forward towards ensuring an improvement in the lives of PWVI in Uganda.

Perhaps most notably for PWVI, the introduction of an Organisation for the Blind (Uganda Foundation for the Blind- UFB) in 1952 and later Legislation in the name of Uganda Foundation for the Blind Act, (1954) brought a ray of light in the lives of PWVI. This resulted into the establishment of the first school for the Blind in Uganda in 1955 (Matovu, 2005).

## **2.3 Transitioning into work**

In all human developmental transitions, entry into employment is the most crucial stage in an individual's efforts to assert her or himself as an adult (Byner, (1998) in Burchardt, (2004). However while the process of transition from one stage of life to the other may be without any significant difficulties for an ordinary youth without disability, this may be an

unattainable goal for many youths with disabilities (Gargiulo, 2009). Kirk, Galloway, Anastasiow, and Coleman, (2006) are in agreement with these finding as he argues that most children with disabilities may need long time assistance in their transition efforts if they are to succeed. Gargiulo, (2009) cited a survey done by Harris and Advocates, (2004) which observed that there were only 35% adults with disabilities employed on full or part time basis compared to 78% of adults without disabilities. This report alludes that those with Visual Impairment are included among this group of PWDs.

Kirk et al. (2006) argue therefore that there are mainly two key factors that can boost the transition process; quality of family support, and individual input. His assertion of family role playing a central role in transition may be an explanation why there might be fewer PWVI at work in a sense that most children with visual impairment are born in families and in communities where there might be a great degree of negative attitudes towards disability among them as earlier noted by Matovu, (2005). This in turn may justify the lack of necessary support from the family in a number of aspects. This lack of family support may as well result into low self-esteem for the child with visual impairment hence limiting the individual input. The fact that self-esteem thrives within the cultural environment in which an individual lives (Hales, 1990) may be a confirmation of the importance of family support.

The above argument could be the reason for Rogoff, (2003) to argue that transitions across adulthood are cultural, community events in that they are points in life when individuals change roles in their community's structure. Therefore, limitation in self-esteem may result into low coping levels of adjusting to different situations by an individual with visual impairment hence limitation in participation. In order to avoid this kind of situation, there is need therefore for both parents and teachers to plan for this important process of transitioning from school into work.

While trying to understand this process of transition from school into work for PWVI better, it seemed to be different and more challenging for PWVI. It was therefore necessary for this study to use some theoretical knowledge that would help the researcher to understand how these challenges can be turned round in order to ensure a smooth transition for PWVI. We should note that theories are important for; helping us to interpret and clarify complex issues; providing a structure for our initiatives; and for the fact that theories enhance our ability to attain goals that we have set for ourselves (Drapela, 1990).

Against the background of this theoretical knowledge therefore, it was envisaged that the use of theory in this study would help a great deal in understanding the complex issue of transition from school into work by PWVI. As such, this study was inspired to use the “Enrichment Theory” as advanced by Befring, (1997; 2000; 2006). The theory would thus provide a structure and basis for discussing the complex phenomenon of transition from school into work by PWVI.

A brief account of the main features of the Enrichment Theory that this study deemed important indicates that the theory aims at ensuring that all persons socialise and interact with each other in a supportive environment regardless of their distinctive features. Since Rogoff (2003) referred to transitions as cultural community events that require individuals to have a shift in their roles in society, PWVI are no exception. They ought to have a role to play in society regardless of their loss of sight. The fact that the Enrichment Theory considers a supportive environment in undertaking the transition process, this was one reason for using the Enrichment Theory as the study sought to find out support required to register a smooth transition too. Therefore, during the discussion of findings for this study, the Enrichment Theory would be used to help understand the phenomenon of transition into work for PWVI.

Further motivation for using this Theory in the study stemmed from the fact that the Enrichment theory also aims at seeing individual differences as resources rather than as problems. This line of thinking gave the researcher further impetus to get experiences from PWVI, expressing how they were able to transit from school into work despite limitations in vision and other challenges that come along. This was for the fact that PWVI in Uganda enter the field of employment disadvantaged of having lesser technical skills and for the fact that cultural bias already pre-determines their fate to trades like begging and other informal jobs (Mange et al. 2001).

Further still, the Enrichment Theory suggests that when the right conditions are provided to persons who are vulnerable, then there is an assumption that ideal conditions for everybody else will also be guaranteed. This means that the welfare of PWVI in as far as registering a smooth transition from school into work is concerned will ensure that other persons without visual impairment will have satisfaction too. This could be an explanation as to why there are persistent efforts from Rehabilitation organisations, national authorities like policy makers, service providers, among others all working hard towards ensuring that the goal of having PWD’s realise their full potential is achieved (McBroom et.al. 1998).

In the next section, this study endeavoured to undertake the task of finding out what it requires to plan for a smooth transition from school into work for PWVI.

### **2.3.1 Planning for transition**

Burchardt, (2004) observes that although most of the literature about transition of youths with disabilities agrees that youths with disabilities have the same dreams and aspirations as their colleagues without disabilities, a wide gap between their aspirations and outcomes has comprised a big percentage of reports in several publications about transition.

The Committee on Disability in America, (2007) argues that although each population of PWD's may have unique transition needs, the unifying factor is that findings usually underline shared challenges and negative outcomes. As unemployment and social isolation usually top the list as the most salient factors, it would be ideal to design strategies to address these outstanding.

According to a study carried out by Stewart, Freeman, Law, Healy, Burke-Gaffney, Forhan, Young, & Guenther, (2009) in Canada, youths with disabilities, parents, community members, service providers, educators, and researchers suggested key aspects that ought to be observed while planning for transition. Having collaborative initiatives and policies; building capacity of people and the communities; ensuring that information and resources are available to all involved in the transition process; and the fact that education is a critical component of any transition strategy at all levels including the families, community members; service providers and society should all be given attention.

While education is considered as a key aspect in any transition strategy (Stewart et al. 2009), Holbrook and Koenig, (2000) observe that the emergence of a liberal arts education theory in the 1950's which pays no emphasis on career education not until after high school graduation may be one reason education may not be producing students that have job related skills. This creates a lot of worries to parents of children with disabilities, and those with visual impairment in particular.

Sacks and Silberman, (1998) observe for instance that when children with visual impairment reach the age of 15 years, parents begin to show great concern of what the future of their



children will be after leaving school. Their main concern is to see to it that their children are able to have a remunerative career. Sacks and Silberman therefore advise that it is vital for the teacher and parents to work together in order to discuss a transition plan for a child with visual impairment. They argue that this can be done by letting parents bring a list of dreams for their child so that a personal futures planning session can be undertaken. This entails establishing aspects like what the child with visual impairment will be doing in the real life situation for a living, where the child will be living and with whom, and what the position of the parent in the child's life would be like, among others.

The International Labour Office, (1998) also stresses the fact that the child with a disability and for this sake a child with visual impairment needs to develop his personal goals and identify the role she/he wants to play in society. Perhaps, the most crucial point in this process is for both the teacher(s) and the parent(s) to clearly define the term work. This is crucial depending on the social contexts in which an individual is living. Himmelweit and Costello, (1995) for instance point out that it is not what one does but the social context in which the activity is done that plays a central role in determining whether an activity will be seen as work or not. In light of the above submission, Kirby et al (1997) assert that the most recognised distinction used to differentiate between work and other activities not considered as work is the fact that work is associated with paid labour. It is through such guidelines that both the teacher and the parents should look at in the various contexts to see what activity will constitute paid labour for a child with visual impairment. It is through such choices that the PWVI can choose a career for life.

The above advancements emphasise the interpretive/constructivist theory which asserts that reality is born through a process of social construction, in that reality is not pre determined and therefore not waiting to be discovered (Guba, and Lincoln, 1989). In their illustration of this notion, they claim for instance that disability is socially constructed and as such will have different implications to different people. In Guba (ibid) illustrations based on the constructivists' advancements, one can therefore note that the different constructions in a given society greatly determine the definition of what constitutes a job. In addition to this observation, one can make an observation that what a given society thinks a Person with Disability can do and cannot has a great impact in determining what kind of job that a PWVI will be allocated. This is greatly dependant on the fact that the definition of the term disability is not constant in various contexts as it is socially constructed.

This is a common stand in Uganda as different societies have embraced PWVI in different ways owing to the vast cultural diversities present. Whereas policies and laws governing employment of PWD's in Uganda are in place, the constructivist theory seems to be playing a central role in determining the fate of education, and ultimately employability of PWVI. Different people have different social constructions towards disability and thus influence their will to implement policies and laws concerning PWVI in particular and those with disabilities in general. The political will to ensure implementation of the existing policies is also largely dependent on the various politicians from the different society's harbouring different social beliefs towards disability.

For instance, in as far as education at all levels is concerned, many issues concerning PWD's still need disseminating. Some people for instance still do not know the potentials and the rights of persons with disabilities (Baguwemu et al, 2008). They are denied education and subsequently can't be taken up in future for purposes of employment. It is therefore incumbent on all stakeholders planning for the transition of a child with visual impairment to take into account all the social implications towards achieving this ultimate goal of planning for a smooth transition. Sacks and Silberman (1998) suggest therefore that there is need for children with visual impairment to train in each of the primary training areas of: activities of daily living, communication, socialisation, and career exploration and employability in order to register a smooth transition. They emphasise however, that having mentioned all the above factors, a smooth transition from school into work was largely dependent on social skills and learning to get along with others. Their argument is consistent with the Human Development Theoretical Framework advanced by Vygotsky, (1978) which maintains that the process of lifelong development was dependent on social interaction that also culminates into cognitive development.

Mason, McCall, Arter, McLinden, and Stone, (2002) sum it up all by claiming that the whole process of transitioning should look at ways of encouraging and facilitating the involvement of young people in planning for their own futures and identifying the support and resources that would facilitate the transition process. The development of independent living and autonomy should be central to this transition plan.

Having related what different writers have discussed concerning planning for the transition of PWVI from school into work, it was important to find out what other authors have written

about what the possible barriers to transition could be. In the following section I presented barriers encountered by PWVI as they transit from school into work.

### **2.3.2 Barriers in the transition from school into work for PWVI**

Despite the fact that a number of efforts aimed at providing education to PWVI have been undertaken, a number of barriers are still blamed for their limitation in employment after their completion of school. However, before embarking on this important aspect, the reader needs to know what a barrier is. According to Merriam online Dictionary, “a barrier is a natural formation or structure that prevents or hinders movement or action.” With the identification of likely barriers in the transition of PWVI, it makes it possible for concerted efforts to be drawn towards overcoming such barriers hence fostering a smooth transition from school into work.

As earlier noted at the beginning of this section, education attainment has not been synonymous with attaining employment for PWVI in Uganda. This could be attributed to the fact that students with special educational needs may not greatly achieve from educational programmes that are intended for them (OECD, 1997). In particular, Crandell, and Robinson, (2007) argue that this kind of imbalance is greatly skewed toward disadvantaging PWVI because their problems are more often than not misunderstood by the sighted world. Crandell and Robinson (ibid) assert that employers view them as the most difficult to place.

To augment the above observation, Moore and Wolffe (1997) observed that there were a number of barriers to employment that rehabilitation professionals and researchers attributed to being the root cause of unemployment for PWVI. They cited negative attitudes on the side of employers toward PWVI as one of the key barriers. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 1998) is in consonance with Moore et al. by arguing that employers usually lack a clear understanding of the qualifications and capabilities of PWD's due to the stereotypes embedded among them.

The lack of employment and employment-related skills by PWVI was also cited by Moore et al. This could be attributed to the fact that school may not offer all the employment related skills that are required in the labour market (ILO, 1998).

In addition Moore et al. also cited lack of motivation for employment as another factor. This lack of motivation could be linked to a limitation in exploration of available job opportunities.

In Uganda, as observed by Mange et al. (2001) the vast majority of PWVI live in rural areas where peasant farming and animal husbandry are the key occupations. This implies that the basis for their employment will lie in the areas of Agriculture and animal husbandry. Mange et al. further observe that PWVI who manage to migrate to the city are more into the private jobs like crafts making, being street or village musicians or performing routine work in factories and other forms of employment. Those with relevant qualifications are mainly seen in trades like being switchboard operators, teaching, doing secretarial work, and other forms of jobs in the private sector.

Mange et al. however, argue that with the improvement of education and rehabilitation services in Uganda, other trades like social work, law, business and politics have been pursued by persons with visual impairment. This is yet however to be greatly reflected in the general population. They further observed however, that the attainment of employment by PWVI had been greatly hampered by the fact that there was to a great extent a high level of unemployment and under employment in the general population, thereby making employers demand for longer and better professional qualifications with the assumption that PWVI may not be in position to provide them. This same scenario was reflected by the European Commission (EC) Joint Employment Report (1998) where they asserted that contemporary employment growth demanded a strategy that is offensive in nature, characterised by superb physical productive capabilities, coupled with knowledge and skills. Mange et al. argue that such a pre-requisite for attaining employment makes it more difficult for PWVI to attain employment as they are already disadvantaged by technical and cultural factors.

In return, the above observation may indirectly affect PWVI abilities of having role models in society (Moore and Wolffe, 1997), especially when it comes to employment opportunities in the formal sector, since they may not have anyone to emulate in the formal employment sector.

In addition, lack of government incentives towards attainment of work for PWD's, in which category PWVI are included, was also outlined as a leading barrier (Moore et al. 1997). The fact that governments have spearheaded the drafting and passing of several good policies that would enhance employment of PWD's, the situation is hampered by the fact that they are not implemented (Greve, 2002). This may be a result of their lack of interest in issues concerning disability. The same governments that spearhead the drafting and passing of these policies ought to ensure that they are implemented too.

Moore et al. (1997) also claimed lack of access to information was another barrier in the efforts of PWVI to attain employment. The fact that most, if not all of the print media where jobs are usually advertised has no provision for Brailled versions in Uganda, leaves a wide information gap between PWVI seeking employment opportunities that are advertised in those media.

These barriers that were enumerated by Moore et al. (ibid) may not be any different to the situation in Uganda. The cited factors may be among the leading barriers that may contribute towards limiting PWVI towards attaining jobs. This study is moving towards trying to establish experiences of PWVI who have transited from school into work so that factors that either influence or hinder attainment of employment for PWVI in Uganda are obtained.

In addition to the above barriers, Salome and Paige (1984) reported barriers basing on PWVI who were not able to successfully retain competitive employment. They attributed their failure primarily to the lack of knowledge among the general public about the spectrum of mental and physical capabilities of PWVI. In addition, the lack of successful personal and vocational experiences of which may lead to the reduction of self worth of the PWVI was also outlined.

More still, the barrier of employer resistance to hiring PWD's for reasons best known to them was also outlined. This view was similarly shared by a study carried out in Uganda by Baguwemu, et al, (2008) who observed that PWD's were not employed by employers because they lacked knowledge of what to do about the needs of a worker with disabilities, lacked awareness of the working abilities of PWD's, and also for the lack of organisational policies regarding the employment of PWD's. Further still, additional findings by Baguwemu, et al. 2008 also indicated that employers were overprotecting PWD's in a way. In one of their submissions for instance, their study reported that employers thought that employing PWD's might involve them in accidents that might lead to further disabilities.

More to that, other responses in that study by Baguwemu (ibid) pointed towards ugly physical appearance as another reason employers gave for not employing PWD's in their firms. Additional findings also indicated that not many PWD's were seeking employment among other reasons. Perhaps this could be a result of loss of hope and esteem to look for jobs because of continuous frustrations they might have experienced or hear from others. All the above challenges noted by their study indicate some of the outstanding challenges towards

attaining employment by PWD's in the employers' perspectives in Uganda. Although their study was not specific to a particular disability, the challenges mentioned in the above study by Baguwemu, et al. 2008 are just an indication of what PWVI are likely to encounter in their transition efforts from school into work. This is because PWVI fall under this category of PWD'S that Baguwemu et al. were reporting about. Worst still, they are even likely to face more challenges than any other disabilities due to loss of sight.

More barriers by other authors were further reported. It was noted for instance that insufficient personal and vocational training and career planning experience were also another set of barriers (Greve, 2002). From the perspective of Greve (ibid) I can relate this kind of situation to rigid structures and procedures in the educational system which includes but not limited to rigid assessment procedures, and the lack of co-ordination between schools and the employment field which doesn't facilitate a smooth transfer of students from school into work

Further still, the barriers created because of losing vision as observed by Mason, McCall, Arter, McLinden, and Stone, (2001) which vary depending on the degree of loss and the age of onset were also noted as some of the reasons data revealed such unemployment rates. These challenges may include the following but not limited to a reduction in self-esteem, limitation of access to information about job opportunities, rare opportunities of meeting adults with visual impairment who would serve as role models, and the fact that there may be limited opportunities for having direct experience of the world of work. This may be restricted through the lack of access to part time jobs since most of the work requires vision. These could be some of the outstanding challenges associated with loss of vision and attaining work and might not get any better with the loss of vision once they do not receive good attention.

When all the barriers observed above are analysed, one can surely agree that the transition of PWVI from school into work is a process that requires concerted efforts to address those barriers with the aim of registering a smooth transition from school into work. This is one reason I undertook efforts to find out from other writers what kind of help could be extended to PWVI in order to address the challenges above.

In light of the above submissions, I made efforts to present what other writers have discussed in relation to help in the transition for PWVI. This was done in the next section.

### **2.3.3 Help needed in the transition from school into work**

As it was reflected in the definition that the term transition is “a process,” this implies a need for preparatory work in a given period of time in order to prepare an individual if a smoother transition is to be realised (Greve, 2002). All support rendered towards PWVI in their transition process should therefore be aimed at ensuring that they register a smooth transition from school into work. The fact that the Labour Force Survey (EC, 2000) stressed the idea that transition from school into work was not a straightforward venture, it requires that those providing support to PWVI have to take note of this fact keenly. They argued that one’s completion of school per se might not culminate into attainment of employment. Their survey observed that transition into work was a gradual process, usually punctuated with spells of studies and work in between. In the Ugandan context however, one can argue that spells of lack of work after school, particularly for PWVI can also be a characteristic of this period.

In addition, it should also be noted that different people need varied support especially while still in school as noted by (Sacks, et al. 1998). Sacks et al, (1998) cite Daniels and Weiderholt, (1998) who suggest a functional literacy model in providing this support. The model works by identifying children by the amount of support they need to succeed in their transition from school into work. They divide this support in three levels. At the informational level, students with visual impairment get limited support, sharing the same instructional procedures as their peers without disabilities. However, they claim that this category has few students with or without disabilities.

At the other level is the instructional level. Here, the teacher provides average support and instruction to the students. The gist of it all as Sacks and Silberman, (1998) claim should be focused towards enabling a learner with visual impairment to be in position to transfer the knowledge attained in school into their real life situation. They also argue that auditory, visual, and kinesthetic training should augment support at this level if learners with visual impairment are to benefit from the knowledge and skills taught to them at school.

The third stage is the Advocacy level, where students require much more support such as apprenticeship as a means of ensuring that one readily fits in society when the transition process is complete. Rogoff, (2003) reflects on apprenticeship learning by arguing that it involves picking up values and skills in an incidental way through ones close involvement with a socialising agent who is usually proficient in the given skills. Rogoff, (2003) cited Coy,

(1989) and Lave, and Wenger,(1991) who argued that this involves novices learning their trades by engaging themselves with their fellow apprentices and the master in the real production while observing their peers and master as well as learning through their own involvement. Apprenticeship can be of great importance to PWVI since it greatly improves their dexterity, knowing that their tactile sense accounts for a greater percentage in the way they gather and use information.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Generally, all the aspects presented above in Chapter Two were intended to give the reader a picture of some salient aspects about transition that have been presented by a number of writers. These included previous research studies too.

Despite all those remarkable considerations as noted in this chapter, PWVI have continued to encounter a number of challenges especially in relation to attaining comprehensive education, employment, and living an independent life. It was therefore in my interest to investigate the perceived experiences of PWVI in their transition from school into work. This would help me to obtain a clear picture of how transition can be possible despite the stiffest of barriers in their transition efforts. This desire was strengthened by the argument that every ecological transition is both a consequence and an instigator of developmental processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In Bronfenbrenner's examples of transition for instance, he notes that transitions may entail finding a job, changing jobs, and losing a job (P. 27). This implies therefore that whatever challenges and opportunities PWVI in Uganda are facing in the transition from school into work, there will always be a lesson to learn. This notion too seems to be in great harmony with the Enrichment Theory by Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000) which tends to look at challenges as opportunities.

Having looked at the theoretical framework of this study, in the next chapter, I embarked on presenting the methodology I used to carry out this study.



# **CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology**

## **3.1 Introduction**

In Chapter Three, the process of building up the study and the way it was organised are presented. Firstly, I described what qualitative design is since this was the methodology I used to guide me in the formulation of the research procedure and approaches for obtaining data regarding perceived experiences of PWVI who had transited from school into work.

In this chapter, I describe and discuss the selection of cases, choice of design of the study, and methods. I also described the instruments of data collection and procedures of data analysis and also made efforts to justify them. The explanation and justification was made with reference to ethical issues and the way in which data were collected, sorted, thematised, analysed, and presented. It was in this section where I shed more light on issues of validity and reliability of this study.

## **3.2 Design of the study**

A research design is a set of measures and procedures for organising variables, selecting research samples, streamlining a systematic system for data collection, and also a way of taking into account the right techniques for analysing and interpreting the collected data (Gall et al., 2007). From this perspective, one can assume that it is the general lay out of the researcher's activities while carrying out a study.

As the gist of this study focused on finding out perceived experiences of PWVI who had transited from school into work, I chose a case study design following a qualitative approach to guide this study towards pursuing its goal. A case study is defined as an in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real life context, which in turn reflects the perspectives of the participants involved in the phenomenon (Gall et al., 2007).

I chose case study design because it can be used to study almost any topic or any given phenomenon harmoniously with a variety of data collection methods and analyses used in line with qualitative approaches (Gall et al., 2007). In addition, I used case study design because it produces detailed descriptions of the phenomenon under study (Gall et al., 2007; Mertens and

McLaughlin, 2004). More to that, case studies are attributed to developing possible explanations of the phenomenon, and for the fact that they have a possibility to evaluate the given phenomenon (Gall et al. 2007). For this particular study, I used a case study that is descriptive in nature as the design of this study. Therefore, the results were geared towards describing perceived experiences of PWVI who have transited from school into work. I sought these experiences from PWVI who had been in school and were now having gainful employment.

On the other side, the reader needs to know why I used a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach uses methodologies designed to provide rich and contextualised impressions of a given phenomenon in an educational or social setting (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Schwandt, 2001). The findings produced by qualitative research studies are not arrived at by statistical procedures or any means of quantification, but rather through interpretive analysis (Straus and Corbin, 1998). In accordance with Mertens and McLaughlin, (2004) qualitative methods are characterised by a number of features; one is that they aim at eliciting meaning and understanding, two, they involve field work, three, they use an inductive oriented method of data analysis, four, is that they produce findings that are richly descriptive in nature, and five is for the fact that they give a contextual picture of the phenomenon that is being studied.

Therefore, a qualitative research approach is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups of people attach to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). It is an approach that includes both a focus on a particular phenomenon or a class of phenomena and a selected research approach for studying such phenomena (Gall et al., 2007). The phenomenon under investigation for this particular research was **transition from school into work**. A phenomenon as defined by Gall et al, (2007) is “a process, event, person or other item of interest to the researcher.” (P. 447). Usually, a phenomenon is characterised by number of attributes as observed by Denscombe, (2007): First, it is “experienced directly rather than being conceived in the mind as some abstract concept or theory.” Secondly, it is, “something that stands in need of explanation; something of which we are aware of but something that, as yet, remains known to us only in terms of how it appears to us directly through our senses.” (P. 77)

Gall et al. (2007) note that once clarification of the phenomenon is done, the researcher can select a case for intensive study. For this study therefore I used a single case study with

multiple embedded units used to study perceived experiences of PWVI who had transited from school into work.

Against this methodological background, I chose to use qualitative oral interviews as the method of obtaining data from employed PWVI because utterances obtained from interviews would be easily transcribed from audio into written than if I had used questionnaires that would be written in Braille. Using oral interviews made it easy for me to transcribe the data from the recorded oral utterances since the interviews were conducted in English. The responses were thus transcribed verbatim because the research report was also written in English.

As Gall et al. (2003) assert that in trying to understand human behaviour in a natural setting, one ought to take into account the meaning and the process of arriving at the meaning. This is one reason I used hermeneutics as a means of deriving meaning from the data that were collected. Gall et al. (2007) describe hermeneutics as a process of arriving at meaning from a text through continuous harmonisation between interpretations of meanings as parts of a text and the text as a whole. This compels a qualitative researcher to interpret phenomena using conventional standards, where the basis of conflict, argument and compromise should be rooted in the text from the data rather than from the researcher's personal perspective, thus the need to collect data from the field. I therefore embraced the above notion bearing in mind the interpretive perspective that underlies most qualitative studies (Gall et al. 2007).

### **3.3 Target population and selection of cases**

The first step in identifying the target population is to define it (Gall, et al. 2007). This study earmarked five cases to be studied. They comprised two-employed male PWVI and three female employed PWVI who had remunerable employment after school.

The selection of these five cases was in line with Gall, et al. (2007) who argued that the process of selecting a case(s) is largely dependent on what the researcher wants to talk about at the end of the study. As the phenomenon under investigation for this study was "transition from school into work by PWVI, it was important to find these experiences from PWVI that had undergone the process of transition and had remunerable employment after school. For purposes of getting unbiased experiences, both genders were considered in this study. The

aim was to share their experiences of how they were able to make it through to the point of attaining employment.

In addition, being a qualitative study in nature, the study aimed at giving an in-depth and detailed insight on a small sample selected purposefully (Gall et al. 2003). The reason behind purposeful sampling is that it aimed at selecting participants that were helpful to the researcher in understanding the problem and the research question at hand (Creswell, 2009). The cases were selected on grounds that they were typical (Gall et al. 2007), that is, they were PWVI and were those that were engaged in formal gainful employment after school where they were guaranteed a salary.

Five cases in total were selected purposefully with the help of Uganda National Association of the Blind (UNAB), the organisation of all Blind persons in Uganda. They were identified following the criteria presented by the researcher. The criteria required that the selected cases were: a) a PWVI that is above eighteen years and were users of Braille as their first written language, b) persons who are blind with no additional disabilities, c) PWVI that had been in school and were current holders of a job, d) living and working in the central region of Uganda. Thus, the five cases selected were considered to be information rich (Gall et al. 2007) and would therefore contribute towards answering the research question that sought to find out what the perceived experiences of PWVI who had transitioned from school into work were.

With the initial contact having been made by UNAB, I was given the contacts for each of the selected cases and I contacted each of them individually on telephone. During this initial contact, I introduced myself and further briefed the participants about the study. I then fronted the participants with a request to have an appointment to have an interview session with them. This was done and appointments were made, although some of them were not fulfilled. We had to make fresh appointments in between..

### **3.4 Justification for the selection of the five cases**

In order to answer the research question at hand, I selected a total of five cases purposefully to help me find answers to the research question at hand. I sought to find out what perceived

experiences of PWVI were when transitioning from school into work. Of the five cases, at least one female case was selected from each of the three districts under study. This kind of selection was aimed at establishing the experiences of the participants with consideration of the factors that enabled or limited their transition process from school into work among the cases.

I referred to the five cases selected for this study as respondent P, Q, R, S and T which were pseudo names. This was to ensure anonymity as one of the key ethical aspects of maintaining confidentiality of the selected cases. I chose the respondents from three districts in the central region, which was the targeted area of the study. The cases selected comprised two male and three female PWVI that were engaged in gainful employment.

This was aimed at having views from both genders to account for their experiences in the process of transition from school into work. Particularly, female cases were selected in order to find out how females with visual impairment were able to make it with regard to attaining employment. This would be vital for the study because literature asserts that there are a number of challenges associated with the female gender, especially one with a disability in terms of reduced access towards attaining education, training, and employment of any sort (The Daily Monitor Newspaper of 13.01.2012).

Furthermore, the cases were those that had remunerative employment with a salary in formal employment sectors of employment that are predominantly occupied by ordinary persons without disability. This would help me to establish what their experiences were like so that they would be used by other PWVI still in the process of transition as points of reference so that they can be supported to register a smooth transition from school into work.

### **3.5 Gaining access to the main study**

The process of gaining access to the whole study began with seeking permission from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) as required. I was granted this permission and I set off to the field to collect data. (See Appendix 6) In Uganda, it was also necessary to seek permission from the relevant authorities before embarking on data collection. First, I contacted the Ministry of Education and Sports for further permission. However, they clarified that since I was not going to carry out this study in educational institutions, there was

no need to grant me permission from them. This implied that I had to seek permission and consent from the individual respondents selected and or the institutions where they worked.

Since I had not identified the respondents, I therefore saw it important to contact Uganda National Association of the Blind (UNAB), as an organisation that unites all persons who are blind in Uganda. UNAB had all information about the respondents' places of work and all the other details that I needed about my potential respondents. I then made contact to UNAB through a written request for them to identify and make the initial contact with the potential respondents. I explicitly described the project to UNAB in the discussion with its leadership. The criteria for identification of the potential respondents was also included as explained in the previous section that they had to be: a) above eighteen years and were Braille users, with Braille as their first written language, b) persons who were blind with no additional disabilities, c) PWVI that had been in school and were in a job, d) living and working in the central region of Uganda.

The initial contact to the individual respondents was made by UNAB and I was thereafter equipped with their contact addresses. This enabled me to make direct contact with the participants through phone calls and as a result, appointments for having interviews were scheduled for those who consented to participate in the interview.

With this step done, I sought written consent from each respondent (Gall et al. 2007) before interviews were conducted. First, I explained the research topic to them with all the necessary detail up to its conclusion (Goodwin, 2005). Their right to withdraw from the study at any given time was emphasised too. I also made it clear to the respondents that they had the right to refuse to take part in the whole exercise if they felt so, and that there would be no disadvantages or punishment associated with their actions. As soon as I had ensured that this was done, I further assured each respondent of confidentiality in the whole exercise of the research process even as I was to record the interview voices. I guaranteed that confidentiality would also entail not disclosing their names and places of work. I did this in written form and both the respondent and I attained a copy of the written consent (See Appendix 5). Once this was done, I established more rapport through informal talk and later, I carried out the actual process of interviewing my respondents.

### **3.6 The research process**

I began the whole research process with lectures that gave me some insight of the topic at hand. This was followed by identification of the research problem which I refined to ensure that it is relevant to the field of Special Needs Education with particular reference to transition of PWVI from school into work which was my centre of interest. I did this by reading literature related to the research problem in addition to my personal experiences as a teacher. I also made consideration to see to it that the study would be completed within the given two year time frame as a bona fide student of Oslo University.

I then wrote my research proposal which was later on subjected to comments from peers with guidance from my professors in a class seminar before submitting it for approval. Meanwhile, I continued reading more literature in the area of transition. An interview guide with semi structured questions was then developed as the research tool to be used to collect data. At this juncture, it would have been relevant to carry out a pilot study, but this was however not possible due to failure of having the right volunteer to help undertake this step. The researcher then decided that the number of respondents be raised from the initial four to five in order to give allowance for more opportunity to test the effectiveness of the tool for collecting data so that the right data for the study is collected. Later, the data obtained by the first interview was also used because it didn't vary much with the subsequent ones that were conducted after making amendments of the tool.

The researcher then left for the field to collect data. The data collection process took place between the months of September, and December. In the months prior to the process of data collection, the researcher sought permission from the authorities and also from the various individuals who were the respondents. This was done with the help of an introduction letter that was issued by the University of Oslo as earlier described and the actual collection of data commenced. When the first interview was taken, it was observed that there was need to reframe some of the questions in order to give respondents more time to talk about their experiences. This was done and the subsequent interviews were able to elicit better information than the first one in terms of better arrangement. However, data from the first interview was also interesting and therefore was not thrown away because there was not much difference in the content. Data from the first interview were also used.

Data were collected through conducting interview sessions with employed PWVI that had been in school. The responses were recorded both on paper and also using an audio recorder with permission from the respondents (Denscombe, 2007). Interviews were conducted in English and therefore were transcribed verbatim without need to translate them. On return to Norway, data were transcribed and re checked for correctness by listening to the audio records and checking on the transcribed scripts. However, although Gall et al. (2007) suggest that data should be transcribed while the researcher is still in the field, not all interviews were transcribed in the field. This was because most of the respondents had a very busy schedule and most of the interviews were done towards the end of field work with many gaps between the first one and the subsequent ones. Data were then presented in the study by coding them and then identifying sub-categories and categories. However, it was sometimes difficult to find the categories from the coded data as some of the sub-categories were turned into categories. When this was done, a discussion in the study was made and a conclusion and recommendation were given.

### **3.7 Instruments and methods of investigation**

The key instrument for eliciting information from the five cases selected purposefully was interview. Kvale (1996) describes a research interview as a professional form of conversational technique that entails awareness of the methodological forms of the questions asked, focus on the dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee and a critical attention of what is said. Interviews were carried out to establish how PWVI experience the phenomenon of transition from school to work by asking those that went through it to narrate their story.

I chose interviews as the method of data collection because; (i) they probe the respondents' beliefs, attitudes and their experience deeply (ii) they give allowance to the interviewer to modify the items in the interview that are not clear to the respondents (Gall et al, 2007) and for the fact that (iii) they are useful when participants cannot be directly observed, and (iv) historical information can be provided by participants (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, my choice to use interviews was also for the fact that (V) interviews require simple equipment and build on conversational skills that are usually possessed by researchers prior (Denscombe,



2007). I considered all the above factors as crucial in influencing my selection of interview as the key tool for eliciting information. Particularly, as historical information was sought, it would best be obtained through having narrative interviews with respondents telling a story about their transition from school into work.

On the other hand however, interviews may be limited in that there could be some bias in trying to make the respondent answer questions in the interviewers' interest (Gall, et al. 2007), and for the fact that interviews provide indirect information that needs to be filtered through the views of the interviewees (Creswell, 2009) and also for the fact that interviews can be time consuming and difficult in terms of analysis of data (Denscombe, 2007).

The interview comprised both open and structured interview questions. I made the interview guides under the supervision of the research supervisor in order to ensure that all the areas needed were catered for by the research tool and that the tool followed the right research procedures. The voices during the interview sessions were recorded as a way of ensuring that no data would be lost in the process and after the interview session. While I was administering the interviews however, considering that I was not able to carry out a pilot study, I then decided to increase the number of respondents from four to five. The first interview was good though with occasional interruptions, but still it went on smoothly I had planned. However, along the way during the second interview, it emerged that certain questions had to be restructured to give the respondent more room to talk about themselves. This was particularly to request them to talk about themselves and to say what they liked about the process of transition process from school to work and also to account for the challenges and opportunities in this process.

I therefore made amendments to this effect that saw the third to the fifth interviews conducted with these amendments in place. However, it was not possible for me to collect some of the few data from the first two respondents P, and Q as time was not enough to re schedule another meeting with them. However, I was able to contact the two respondents P and Q to that effect through telephone and their views were obtained. One advantage I noted here was that some information that was given in the initial interview could reflect some traits of the subsequent follow up questions. So I used the data from all the five interviews.

### **3.8 My field experience**

One of the challenges I encountered in administering the interviews included difficulty in matching with the respondents schedules in order to find the most appropriate time to conduct the interviews. I carried out some of the interviews with spells of weeks between each other, thus making it difficult for me to harmonise the findings in time. Meanwhile, others were done closely towards the end of the field work hence the limitation to transcribe them during the field. This in turn also made it cumbersome for me to have follow-up interviews.

However, the data that I had obtained in the initial interviews were detailed enough for the study to depend on them.

### **3.9 Ethical issues**

The primary goal of observing the ethical code in research is aimed at ensuring that volunteers/ participants are treated fairly and with respect during their participation in the study; they receive complete information about the study and how the information they give will be treated and published, and that any stress they encounter is relieved and their participation is kept in confidence (Goodwin, 2005). With all this at the back of my mind, I also made reference to the guidelines for conducting a research interview as advanced by Gall et al. (2007) with reference to ensuring that rapport was well established and maintained during the course of the interview process. I also made sure that informed written consent was at all times sought from the given interview respondents, with the issue of confidentiality strongly emphasised. I considered all the above steps right from the time I made the research proposal and I ensured that all issues to do with ethics of the respondents were made clear. As such, the proposal was approved on fulfilling this requirement.

In the field, I wrote letters of informed consent to each respondent where I pledged confidentiality in the whole process of research and after collecting, analysing, and finally in the written thesis. (See appendix 4). Specifically, each of the respondents received a signed written letter of consent during the collection of data. During the transcription of data, I wore personal headsets in a private room and therefore the voices could not be heard by a third party. In addition, I kept the transcribed data in a safe and lockable cupboard where they were retrieved on need. In the publication, no names of respondents were mentioned and neither

were their places of work reflected. I referred to them by their pseudo names, that is, respondent P, Q, R, S and T. In addition, the data that I recorded on the voice recorder were stored on a private computer with a personal password, so they were secure. Later I destroyed the recorded data as required by the ethics of conducting research.

Like all human subjects, confidentiality in a research ought to be protected. However, it was even more incumbent on me to observe ethics in this research since I was dealing with a vulnerable group of persons in society. Their personal details as PWVI had to be protected as much as possible so that no other person could use the information from this study against them say from their employers.

### **3.10 Audio recorder**

In order to record the voices during the interview sessions, I had to first seek written consent from each respondent. This was embedded in the informed written consent in order to further assure the respondents of confidentiality. I chose audio recording as back up to the written scripts since it is out of human ability to record data manually while critical behaviour is occurring at the same time (Gall et al, 2007). I also used audio recording for the fact that it can record unanticipated behaviour along the way, and also for the fact that it gives allowance for original data to be replayed for further scrutiny (Gall et al. 2007 Pp. 270-271). I then stored the recorded voices in a lockable drawer which was regarded as a safe and secure place. The same was for the computer and transcriptions which I did in a private room with personal headsets worn to ensure that no voices would be heard by a third party. This was done as a means of observing confidentiality of the respondents. The typed excerpts of the transcripts were also done on a restricted private computer.

### **3.11 Organisation of data**

After collecting data from the field, raw data were transcribed from audio into written in verbatim. After that, the raw data were transferred into a matrix on a template. I did this using tables that indicated the respondent, their comments (codes), related themes derived, and the related theories or theory in that order. I then coded the data using open coding method as advanced by (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 P. 101). Major themes were then derived from the codes. Themes are salient characteristic features of a case (Gall et al. 2007 P. 452). Themes

served as the basis for analysing the data and the subsequent discussions of the findings. Importantly, it should be noted that in qualitative studies results are not presented as statistical summaries but as analytical summaries that summarise the study at hand (Goodwin, 2005). In Chapter Four, I only presented data but I did not make any attempt in terms of interpreting the results (Goodwin, 2005) as this would be done in Chapter Five.

I presented data in tabular form following the research objectives, and the responses to the questions were interpreted and coded manually. Hermeneutics, which involves an in-depth interpretation of the underlying meanings of text, was used and where I condensed the statements into sub-categories and later into their major categories. Responses from the respondents were coded but the respondents were not identified with their responses. This was followed by a detailed discussion conclusion and recommendations of the study in Chapter 5.

### **3.12: Data management and analysis**

First and foremost, it was important to transcribe the audio recorded interview data before they are presented and analysed. Since interviews were conducted in English, the researcher transcribed them verbatim into written form. The researcher thereafter read through the transcripts again while playing the audio version in order to ensure that what was written clearly tallies with the audio recordings. This was to ensure that the actual words as used by the respondents were the true transcripts.

The second step was that I had to read through the transcripts several times while I was making notes so that I could make sense out of the texts. Denscombe, (2007) argues that this is aimed at helping the researcher to cross reference the data with field notes in order to understand the data in context with consideration of the background factors at the time that were considered relevant in understanding the data at hand.

I used descriptive data analysis procedures which involved consideration of engaging interpretational analysis (examining data closely to determine constructs, patterns and themes) that could help to explain and describe the perceived experiences by PWVI in their transition from school into work. I then coded the data, segmented it, developed sub categories, and regrouped them to form categories. A category is a construct that refers to a certain type of

phenomenon mentioned in the data base (Gall et al. 2007 P. 467). The subcategories then present the different degrees of the construct.

This was followed by subsequent discussions and drawing conclusions from the categories formed. Therefore, I used hermeneutics to derive meaning from the data that were collected, bearing in mind the interpretive perspective that underlies most qualitative studies (Gall et al. 2007). It entails a process of arriving at meaning from a text through continuous harmonisation between interpretations of meanings as parts of a text and the text as a whole (Gall et al. 2007). At this stage however, I experienced challenges in trying to derive categories from the collected data but as much as possible to re examine data in order to derive the categories.

### **3.13: Credibility of data**

Validity and Reliability in qualitative research studies shifts from the positivist paradigm of determining it in terms of causal relationships, generalisation and the extent to which other researchers would arrive at the same results if they studied the same case using the same means (Gall et al. 2007). In Qualitative studies however, a different approach is taken. Gall et al. (2007) cites Guba and Lincoln, (2005) who reveal that in qualitative studies, terms like “credibility,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and “confirmability” replace the positivist notion of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity” (P. 56).

In this study, credibility of data was ensured in that there was peer examination of the findings as they emerged and drafts of the case study reports were made (Gall et al 2007). As open coding was used, the researcher used line to line coding which is an intensive approach to coding that allows the researcher to get closer to the data hence avoiding bringing their own views (Charmaz, 1995 In Giles, 2002). In this way, since data were closely observed, the researcher’s bias was avoided as the researcher’s bases of argument, conflict, and compromise were all grounded in the texts and not imposed on it.

Furthermore, credibility was maintained by ensuring that the researcher’s presence would not skew the responses towards the researcher’s interests. This was observed by ensuring that enough rapport was established with the respondents before the actual interview session was undertaken. The reasons for carrying out the research project were clearly explained to the

respondents and therefore ensuring that the respondents had no reservations in as far as providing the right data was concerned. In the same line, during the interview sessions, the researcher limited interference of the responses given by the respondents by allowing them time to express their views while the researcher only asked for clarification and providing cues that build the conversation.

### **3.14: Limitations of the study**

This study used a case study design with interview as the exclusive method for data collection. Studies that use only one method of data collection are likely to be affected by possible errors that are linked to that method (Robson, 2002). The use of interview as the sole method for obtaining data in this study therefore might have yielded shallow findings since data analysis of interviews is likely to produce non-standard responses (Denscombe, 2007). The use of multiple methods of seeking information could have contributed towards broadening the findings of this study. Therefore the exclusive use of interviews could not permit an extensive study to be carried out. This meant that the findings of the study could not be generalised to a greater population as there were only five respondents in this study for example. The findings were therefore contextual and could not statistically represent the general population of PWVI in Uganda that have undergone the transition process and are into formal employment.

Further still in line with the above factor, since this study investigated perceived experiences of PWVI who had transited from school into work, there could have been other background factors whose statistics and trends ought to have been taken into account for instance how many PWVI there were in school and how many were able to actually attain employment over a given time. This would be good information in following some trend factors that can hinder or foster transition of PWVI from school into work.

Further still, as the researcher wasn't able to carry out a pilot study due to the fact that it was hard to find a volunteer case that would help the researcher to do it in Oslo, it meant that the effectiveness of the tool was not put to test before it was taken to the field to collect data. This could have affected its effectiveness as there were amendments to make during field work in order to refine it.

In light of the above limitations however, this study was able to see to it that measures were taken to address the given limitations. These were the delimitation factors that are presented in the next section.

### **3.15 Delimitations of the study**

Considering the time frame for this study and also given the nature of qualitative studies as this study was one, it was only aimed at giving an in-depth contextual picture of the phenomenon “transition from school into work” for a few selected cases of PWVI. Therefore the question of being limited in terms of generalising the findings was addressed by recommending another study with mixed methods, especially quantitative methods that would have the findings generalised.

Furthermore, whereas it is a fact that mixed methods could have yielded rich results from the study, there was a fear that multiple methods could not be adequately explored taking into account the limited timeframe that there was. If mixed methods had been used, it was feared that the study wouldn’t have been comprehensive enough in that the researcher was not yet conversant with the use of multiple methods especially in the analysis of its data. Such statistical data that were not captured by this study have been recommended for future studies for consideration.

In addition as noted that this study was not able to carry out a pilot study, this was addressed by increasing the number of selected cases from four to five. This would thus give the researcher the opportunity to make amendments where necessary in the subsequent interviews after the first one. For instance, the first interview was taken on well, and the gaps in it were addressed by making amendments in the way in which questions to the respondents were presented, therefore it was better while undertaking the second one, up to the fifth. Particularly, the third through to the fifth interviews were better than the first as amendments were done. One salient factor however, was the fact that even with the amendments; at least most of the salient data were available in all the five interviews and were used.

### **3.16 Conclusion**

Chapter Three generally looked at how the whole study was organised and conducted. It looked at the topic of study and how the study was built right from the start up to the end. The methods of data collection and how data were handled and analysed after their collection were presented. Chapter three also presented the reader with the research experiences that I went through, limitations of the study and the efforts that were made to overcome the limitations in order to ensure that the study achieves its intended goals.

In the next chapter, I presented results of the collected data were presented. The data presented were from five respondents with visual impairment that were having formal gainful employment after transitioning from school.



# CHAPTER 4: Presentation of findings

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the findings of the study. Before presenting the findings, I gave the reader an impression of what my respondents in this study were like. However, some of their details that would identify them were not included in this summary. This was meant to ensure confidentiality of my study participants as required by ethics in research. Data were presented in tabular form following the research objectives. The responses to the questions were interpreted and coded manually. I used hermeneutics to present data from my respondents. Hermeneutics involves an in-depth interpretation of the underlying meanings of text. The statements were condensed into sub-categories and later into their major categories. These categories were used to discuss the findings in Chapter 5. I should bring it to your notice that finding these sub categories and categories was not so easy a task.

## 4.2 Selected subjects and their characteristics

Table 1 shows the selected respondents for the study and their individual characteristics.

**Table 1: Composition of the selected cases and their individual characteristics**

Respondents' code	Residual Vision	Gender, age , and degree of blindness	Education Level
Respondent P	Totally Blind	Male, 56 years, totally blind	Bachelor's degree
Respondent Q	Totally Blind	Male, 30 years, totally blind	Bachelor's degree
Respondent R	Yes	Female, 33 years, with light perception	Diploma certificate
Respondent S	Yes	Female, 36 years, with light perception	Bachelor's degree
Respondent T	Yes	Female, 33 years with light perception	Masters degree

### Summary:

**Cases:** *There were three female and two male. Total = Five cases*

**Levels of education:** *Diploma certificate =One level lower than a Bachelors degree.*

The above table indicates the composition of the participants that were selected for this study. The cases were purposefully selected as indicated previously in Chapter Three. The table shows that all the selected cases were adults and that all of them had gone to school with different levels of academic qualifications with masters degree as the highest level, followed by a first degree, and a diploma certificate which is one level lower than a bachelors degree. The selected cases comprised two male and three female totaling up to five cases.

In the subsequent tables, I presented data that I obtained from the respondents following the research objectives. Under each research objective, I set some questions in the interview that would help me to find answers to the specific objective. This would in return help me in answering the key research question at hand. However, I did not comment on all the data that were presented. Only salient features in the data were identified and presented.

## **4.3 Presentation of findings**

### **4.3.1 Objective one: To establish factors that contribute towards transition from school into work**

Under this objective, two questions were asked. First, respondents were asked what type of help they get when they were transitioning from school into work. Secondly, they were asked to tell what they saw as factors that helped them to transit from school into work. The findings from the responses they gave are presented below. At this juncture, I also want to bring it to the attention of the reader that it was not easy to find the sub-categories and categories for from the sub categories. This was done after thorough re examination of the data. This did not only apply to this objective, but the subsequent objectives too. Next follows the presentation of data.

**Table 2: Type of help PWVI got when were transitioning from school into work**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>
Counselling and guidance from the Association of the Blind	<b>Moral</b>	<b>Support</b>
I got comfort from the Association of the Blind by running to them for assistance at any given point	<b>Support</b>	
UNAB gave me the encouragement to study further		
UNAB used to bring role models who were at different levels to our school		
My parents were interested in me studying and so they didn't hide me away		
My teachers who made the school environment conducive made us feel at home.		
Government paid my school fees and tuition	<b>Financial</b>	<b>Support</b>
I was on the Local Government bursary scheme at my Ordinary and Advanced Levels of education	<b>Support</b>	
I was on government sponsorship at the university		
I had some sponsors who helped me with school fees		
I got Braille paper from UNAB in times of paper crisis.	<b>Material</b>	<b>Support</b>
UNAB lent me a Braille and helped me with paper.	<b>support</b>	
I got a lot of information from the readers and guides who used to read for me.	<b>Collegial</b>	<b>Support</b>
I got a lot of support from my fellow staff at the job	<b>support</b>	
UNAB would repair our Perkins Braille Machines.	<b>Technical</b>	<b>Support</b>
	<b>support</b>	
UNAB gave me a starting point by letting me work as a volunteer.	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Working</b>
After school, the UNAB made us busy.		<b>Experience</b>
The head teacher was teaching a child as a whole	<b>Practical</b>	<b>Empowerment</b>
	<b>skills</b>	

Results from Table 2 above showed three basic forms of help during their transition from school into work. These were in form of support, and this had so many categories of support that ranged from moral, financial, material, technical, and collegial support. On the point of collegial support, one respondent was quoted as saying,

*“... I would say the good rapport with people... because these days, you cannot get a job if you don’t interact with people.”*

Other forms of help were reported in the fact that they claimed they were empowered by skills from their teachers. In addition, help in terms of gaining work experience was also reflected. These categories will be discussed in Chapter 5. In the next aspect still under objective Two, respondents were asked to present what they saw as factors that enabled them to transit from school into work.

**Table 3: In your own words, what do you see as the success factors that have enabled you to transit from school into work?**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub- categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>
My personal intellect Determination right away from the start Hard work and wanting to go to school Having a vision		<b>Personality</b>
I had to decide my life because I wanted a good future Encouragement within me First of all, myself, I was motivated Being committed to what you learnt		<b>Self Esteem</b>
I was encouraged by the blind students I found at school at higher levels who were speaking English Admired the profession of my mother		<b>Modelling</b>
The need to be part of the wider community Being open minded	<b>Open mindedness</b>	<b>Inclusive drive</b>
Putting into practice what we learn I had the necessary qualifications that were needed at the place of work	<b>Hard work</b>	<b>Academic qualifications</b>
Being committed to learning new things and adapting to new life I gave room for disappointment when looking for employment	<b>Flexible</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>
Students helped me to stay on my job My family was supportive		<b>Supportive environment</b>

Results from Table 3 indicated a number of factors that respondents attributed to contributing to their transition from school into work. These were given in the categories of personality, self esteem, modelling, having an inclusive drive, among others.

While presenting the category of personality, respondents reported it in terms of their personal intelligence, hard work, and their desire to go to school. Personality was also reflected in their determination right from the start of school.

In addition to personality, another category emerged and this was in terms of supportive environment. One respondent narrated her experience of a supportive environment when she had just entered the job, and she said that,

*“I remember there is one time when the students organised a demonstration against the head master who had decided to expel me ... but when the students demonstrated, they even advised him to learn from me how to teach.”*

In addition, the issue of having self esteem and having an inclusive mind set were also reported. These will be discussed in the following chapter too.

#### **4.3.2 Summary of findings from objective One**

Among the factors given under objective one as contributing factors to transition were; support, working experience, empowerment, personality, self esteem, modelling, having an inclusive drive, adaptability, possession of academic qualifications and a supportive environment. In the next section, the findings of objective Two are presented.

#### **4.3.3 Objective Two: to find out barriers PWVI encounter during the process of transitioning from school into work**

Under this objective, respondents were asked to respond to a number of aspects from which the barriers they encountered were derived. Respondents were asked to explain how they got into their jobs and how they got information about their jobs. They were also required to mention some of the relevant devices to their jobs that they had prior to attaining their work and also to explain in their own words what they felt the process of transition from school into work was. Their submissions were presented in tables 4 to 7.

**Table 4: Describe how you got into the job**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>
My focus was on working with disability organisations. We graduate and normally come back to look at UNAB or NUDIPU for employment.	<b>Focus on particular employer</b>	<b>Limited choice of jobs</b>
I resorted to working as a volunteer I was appointed to the job after serving as a volunteer My uncle gave me a class to teach as a volunteer I worked on probation for two weeks before I was given the job	<b>Volunteering</b>	<b>Search for Work Experience</b>
I hunted for jobs beyond disability organisations I applied for the job after getting an advertisement	<b>Looked for the job</b>	<b>Unclear job destiny</b>

**Key: UNAB-Uganda National Association of the Blind.**

**NUDIPU- National Union of Disabled Person's in Uganda.**

Results from Table 4 basically indicate three barriers in the way PWVI enter into a job. The salient categories here were the fact that respondents reported that there was limited choice of jobs for PWVI. A respondent was quoted as saying,

*"I was actually moving around, moving to disability organisations finding out if there are any opportunities, but nothing yielded."*

In addition, the barrier of limited working experience was also reported by respondents. In fact most of them reported entering a job after doing some voluntary work. In the next section, barriers related to attaining employment are presented. Respondents were required to tell how they got information about their job. Their responses follow in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: How did you get information about your job?**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>
I was recommended by donors	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Referee</b>
I approached an official who alerted me to apply for the job	<b>Networking</b>	<b>Dependent on others for information</b>
I was called by a relative after an advertisement was made		
I had a friend who connected me to the job		
Some friends who were working in that organisation informed me that they had advertised		
I approached the organisation with a fundraising appeal which gave me an entry point		

Results from Table 5 reflected one key barrier in attaining information especially the job related information as PWVI had completed school and were now embarking on the task of looking for a job. This barrier was limited access to information as they reflected a great dependence on others for information.

In the next table, respondents were required to give some of the relevant devices they had before entering into their jobs. Their submissions follow below in table 6.

**Table 6: Can you describe the relevant devices to your job that you had prior to attaining your job?**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>
I had an ordinary typewriter which I was using to type my drafts Before I had a typewriter	<b>Ordinary typewriter</b>	<b>Old technology</b>
I had a Perkins Braille. I also had a slate and stylus I only had a very old Braille Being a visually impaired, you cannot run away from a Braille machine	<b>Perkins Braille</b>	
I had a Braille 'N Speak	<b>Braille 'N Speak</b>	
I had knowledge of using adaptable computer software	<b>Computer Knowledge</b>	<b>Computer Knowledge</b>

Under this question, a number of responses were obtained and they were coded into one major category. It emerged that during their transition, PWVI interviewed did not have modern technological equipment in their transition efforts. However, one interesting finding indicated that although they did not have modern personal equipment like computers, they reported having endeavoured to attain computer knowledge and skills.

The next section, a description of the whole process of transition was presented.

**Table 7: Which words can you use to describe the whole process of transition from school into work especially for persons with visual impairment?**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>
Its full of excitements Full of so many expectations Its full of disappointments There may be a lot of support in school but no support in attaining employment Not having money to move around looking for jobs	<b>Anxiety</b>	<b>Unpredictable</b>
It's a challenge to adapt to new environments especially at work At the University, you manage everything on your own with the other students	<b>Challenging</b>	<b>Adapting to different environments</b>
Sometimes the teachers didn't understand us well We would at times receive un Brailled exams Sometimes teachers would dictate notes and write difficult words on the blackboard Some of the students would not appreciate our problems as PWVI Not being given due respect	<b>Needs not met</b>	<b>Insensitivity</b>
Interaction with students without visual impairment was good	<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Fosters future inclusion</b>
The challenges at school especially at University made me think and want to learn more Challenges contributed to maturity and enhanced a new thinking The challenges helped to build a spiritual life Not simple but possible through different players	<b>Enhances coping with challenges</b>	<b>Resilience</b>

Following the above question, there were several descriptions revealed. From these descriptions, general barriers in the process of transition were presented. These included respondents describing the process of transition as being unpredictable. They asserted that while there may be support while the PWVI is still in school, they reported that there was no



such support when they were entering into employment. One of the respondents for instance was quoted as saying,

*“... at least through school, things were not as difficult as employment, because you know when you are a child and of course when you are a student, you really get a lot of support from many people. But when it comes to employment, everybody says ahaaa...! Now the tree has grown, we also need fruits from the tree!”*

Still on the process of transition being unpredictable, another respondent reckoned that while at school, there was always a feeling that they were the first to go to school and therefore would get a job immediately; something he claimed was different from the situation on the ground.

Another salient finding was when the respondents reported that there was a lot of insensitivity during the process of transition from school into work. They claimed that sometimes as the teachers were dictating notes, they would just write the difficult words on the chalkboard, which they claimed made it difficult to follow and did not take the care to cater for their needs as PWVI.

The above factors will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five. Results from the findings from Objective Two are summarised below. This will be followed by presenting findings from objective Three.

#### **4.3.4 Summary of findings for objective Two**

From all the above submissions, we can conclude that among the barriers PWVI faced in their transition from school into work included the following among others;

Barriers in getting into the job which included limited choices of jobs, and limited work experience. They also included information barrier that is PWVI depending on others for information, and having old technology. Other findings also revealed that the process of transition was unpredictable, and environmental barriers which demanded them to adapt to harsh environments. They also noted insensitivity of the needs of PWVI as another barrier.

### 4.3.5 Objective Three: To obtain suggestions from employed PWVI about some of the helpful approaches of entering a job after school

In order to tap their responses, respondents were asked a number of questions and these are presented in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: What advice would you give to PWVI towards taking up a job?**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>
Before even getting a job, let them try to volunteer in all possible sectors	<b>Volunteering</b>	<b>Seek work experience before work</b>
Never give up easily Begin with the little money they are given	<b>Resilience</b>	<b>Being Resilient</b>
Try to create their own jobs Utilise the few machines you have at the job	<b>Creativity</b>	<b>Being creative</b>
They should first of all accept the disability They should overcome keeping low self esteem Being confident They should try al opportunities that come up	<b>Self esteem</b>	<b>Positive living</b>
Work hard In case you are given a job, do it in the right way I advise them to work on their papers, that is the most important thing Transferring what you have learnt in school is also very important	<b>Hard work</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
They must learn to adapt to situations very quickly	<b>Coping</b>	<b>Quick to adapt</b>
They need to learn to work as a team They should make sure that they are friendly	<b>Co-operation</b>	<b>Team work</b>

In the respondents' efforts to provide advice to PWVI relating to smooth transition from school into work, a number of ideas were put forward resulting into a number of categories. First, respondents advised PWVI that are still in the process of transition to seek work experience when they complete school by seeking volunteer opportunities where possible.

They also advised that PWVI during their transition should be resilient in that they should never give up easily in whatever they are doing.

Another category was that of ensuring positive living among PWVI. Here, one of the respondents was quoted as saying,

*“I think the first step is to accept the disability and say it has come, it will be with them, it’s not going anywhere, and let them spend much time focusing on their abilities than focusing on their limitations. Because that mindset that I can’t do this, I can’t do that ...no no! It doesn’t work.”*

The other salient factor presented by PWVI was the idea that PWVI in the transition should ensure efficiency at work. Efficiency was reported in terms of hard work and in particular on their academic papers. One of the submissions to this category was quoted saying,

*“They must work hard. This is a world of competition ... this I must say... it’s no longer a world of like ... may be affirmative action, no! No! People want merit. When you come to an organisation like United Growers Union (Pseudo name), yes, they are willing to employ you but on the basis that you have the necessary grades. And if you don’t possess the necessary qualifications, then that means that you will never access such opportunities.”*

The respondent further clarified what exactly has made hi succeed in getting a job by giving more of his personal experiences especially as he stressed the idea of working hard. He added that;

*“Myself I have a second class upper diploma. I think that has worked for me. So each time I pull out my papers, I think I am never discriminated on the basis of my performance. Let it be other factors but not on the basis of performance. Let their performance first of all differentiate them from other competitors so that when you present your papers, someone will say wow! Indeed disability is not inability. But if you are blind and then your performance is very bad ... I think you are digging your own grave!”*

Other submissions on this aspect will be discussed in Chapter Five. Below, a summary of findings from objective Three is presented.

#### **4.3.6 Summary of findings from objective Three**

As seen above, a number of aspects were regarded by respondents as crucial in ensuring a smooth transition from school into work for PWVI. These included working on a number of attributes which included among others; seeking work experience after school, being resilient, ensuring positive living, seeing to it that they were efficient while executing their duties, and also ensuring team work. These and other findings in chapter Four will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5 that follows.

# CHAPTER 5: Discussion of Findings

## 5.1 Introduction

As stated in the previous chapters, the main aim of this study was to investigate Perceived Experiences by Persons with Visual Impairment who had transitioned from school into work. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings that were gathered by this study and presented in Chapter Four. The data were elicited from five employed PWVI who were selected purposefully.

Discussion of the findings was intended to answer the key research question that was in this study that sought to investigate the Perceived Experiences of PWVI who had transitioned from school into work. Since it would be a difficult task finding answers to the big key question at once, objectives were set as a breakdown of the key research question. The answers obtained by these objectives would then be used as a means of answering the key research question.

The objectives set were:

- To establish factors that contribute towards transition from school into work for PWVI
- To find out barriers PWVI during the process of transitioning from school into work
- To obtain suggestions from employed PWVI about some of the helpful approaches of entering a job after work.

And furthermore, in order to attain answers to each objective, a number of questions were set in the interview guide from which answers to the objectives would be obtained.

When discussing the results, the findings that were presented initially in Chapter Four were followed. These were then harmonised with the key theory for this study that was the “Enrichment Theory” advanced by Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000). The basis for using this theory in this study was for the fact that strengths rather than weaknesses are emphasised. It was also due to the Enrichment Theory’s consideration of differences as a resource rather than as a problem. The study envisaged therefore that using the Enrichment Theory would give it impetus to a number of stake holders in the transition of PWVI to reconsider the challenges in

the transition of PWVI as opportunities for improving on their transition process from school into work.

## **5.2 Discussion**

The findings were presented following the three research objectives.

### **5.2.1 Objective One:**

#### **To establish factors that contribute towards transition from school into work for PWVI**

The following results were found by this study as factors that contribute towards transition of PWVI from school into work.

#### **Support**

Results from the findings indicated that in the whole process of transition from school into work, respondents agreed that as PWVI, there was always need for support in a number of aspects. As earlier noted in the definition of transition being a process (OECD/CERI, 1986), it means that it takes time to be accomplished. Respondents therefore cited support in a number of aspects. The first sub-category from which I generated this category of support was in form of moral support which arose mainly from their responses that indicated guidance and counselling they got from their schools, disability organisations and different individuals. They argued that this kind of guidance in a way lifted their courage for doing things especially in pursuit of their studies.

In the same line of support, another aspect of support given by the respondents was financial support. They reflected this mainly in terms money for paying their school fees. They claimed that this was very important in keeping them in school bearing in mind that there was no provision for free education for all in the times they had been to school as it is the policy currently. In addition to financial support, respondents also reported material support in this same category. The need for materials and equipment was always there because most of the materials used by the Blind are too expensive for most of them to afford. For example Braille paper is just imported and therefore is not affordable to most PWVI who have poor family backgrounds. Further support was reflected in terms of collegial support. Their utterances in this regard included provision of information by their colleagues say when a job opportunity

arose which they claimed was of great help in attaining their jobs. In the same line of support, they argued that the technical support they got in terms of repairing their Braille machines when they broke down was so helpful in enabling them cope with taking notes at all times of study. They argued that without this support, it would mean that they would not keep up to date with their sighted colleagues.

What is therefore the implication of these findings to the phenomenon of transition? The reader should notice that as the definition of transition from the Office for Economic Co-operation and Development / Centre for Education and Research Innovation, (OECD/CERI 1986) acknowledges that the phenomenon transition entails realising personal autonomy from the parents, economic self sufficiency, taking up new roles in the society, and being an active member in society, there is obviously need for support because without support, there is a likelihood that a PWVI will experience some hardships in the process of transition. In the perspective of Greve, (2002), all support is aimed at making the process of transition from school into work a smooth one. This implies that support is aimed at reducing the barriers of transition.

These results are significant in a sense that the Enrichment Theory in which this study was anchored strongly advocates for support. Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000) realises the need for support in his theory. The theory asserts that all persons ought to socialise and interact with each other in a supportive environment regardless of their distinctive features. This implies therefore that all individuals including those with and those without disability need support in a way. Therefore support for PWVI is very crucial as noted by the respondents in enhancing transition. One needs however to assess the support needed for each individual as there will always be variations in the need for support depending on the gaps.

### **Working Experience**

Findings in this category indicated that it was necessary for PWVI transitioning from school into work to obtain work experience. However the key question here would be for one to ask why it would be so important to emphasise obtaining work experience when they have obtained reasonable academic qualifications? These results however seem to confirm an earlier study carried out by Mange et al. (2001) who noted that PWVI in Uganda entered the field of employment when they are already disadvantaged by lesser technical skills. These findings therefore seem to suggest that the type of education that Persons with Visual

Impairment attain in Uganda lacks the practical skills needed in the job market. The actual teaching seems not to offer skill based education, but rather knowledge based. Generally, like Stewart et al. (2009) observed that it was around the 1950's when a liberal arts education system that paid little or no emphasis to career education not until after high school graduation was incepted, education for PWVI in Uganda seems to be lacking a great deal in the practical skills for PWVI. From the observation by Stewart et al. one can try to understand why PWVI lack such work related skills because the education system used in Uganda seems to be following the same theory.

The emphasis by respondents of the fact that attaining work experience after school helped them to enter into employment seems to be a significant finding therefore. From their submissions, there are a number of indicators to suggest that if a PWVI does not endeavour to attain work experience after school, she or he would find it hard to enter into employment. The knowledge gained in school seems to fall short of the expectations of employers in addition to the biases they have towards PWVI. The International Labour Organisation, (1998) seems to be in agreement with these findings. They argue that school may not be in position to offer employment related skills needed in the labour market. The implication of these findings seem to suggest therefore that seeking work experience after school is a great factor in supporting transition from school into work for PWVI.

I also see a connection with the idea of seeking work experience and what Rogoff, (2003) refers to as apprenticeship where an individual picks up values and skills in an incidental way through socialising with a more proficient person. I see this as a very important aspect to embrace for all PWVI in the transition process so that they are able to have the practical skills needed at the various places of work.

In line with the Enrichment theory therefore, the notion of looking at challenges as opportunities as the theory suggests seems to be well embraced by those PWVI that managed to transit from school into work. The fact that they saw some opportunity in the challenge of lacking work experience by offering voluntary services after school, they were able to address the deficit of lack of employment experience in a more positive way.



## **Empowerment**

Findings revealed that respondents noted that empowerment was a salient factor in their transition from school into employment. One respondent asserted that her ability to perform a number of tasks independently was a great factor in her efforts to attain employment. Two other respondents related empowerment to their ability to use computer independently which they claim gave them an upper hand when they sought for employment.

These findings seem to suggest that as the main goal of transition from school into work is to foster independent living for a PWVI (OECD/CERI 1986), the empowerment of the individual with skills like mobility, and activities of daily living, should also not be underestimated in terms of attaining a job. More explicitly, the notion of attaining skills of activities of daily living was stressed by Sacks et al. (1998) when they noted that it was incumbent on all schools to ensure that PWVI are trained in each of the primary training areas of; activities of daily living, communication and socialisation, and career exploration and employability if a smooth transition is to be ensured.

These findings therefore seem to suggest that a PWVI who is not independent in doing the above cited activities by Sacks et al. may find it hard to attain a job if most of the activities will require additional help from another individual. The most important thing would be to ensure the necessary support for them to be able to realise the attainment of these skills so that they (PWVI) can perform to their full potentials as the enrichment theory suggests.

## **Personality**

Personality was also revealed as another factor that can enhance the transition of a PWVI from school into work. Respondents presented this result by attributing it to features like determination, hard work, and having vision in all that they plan to do.

The most crucial component of personality however should be reflected in an understanding of what the PWVI are doing in the transition and why they have to do it. This implies that once a PWVI is able to have goals set for achieving, there are chances that they can fulfil their dreams. Without goals, then the whole process of transition to a PWVI could be meaningless. In the same light, development of personal goals is highly stressed by the International Labour Office, (1998) by arguing that PWD's need to identify what roles they have to play in

their future lives. Thus without personality as stressed by the respondents, this can be a very difficult thing to achieve.

Basing on the argument that an Individuals Transition Plan should be based on the individual's motivation and wishes (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2002), I see a connection between the findings in this study and the above argument. For instance, all respondents seemed to have developed their personal ambitions right from school. Their ambitions could have been motivated by the fact that they felt they should have a better life as adults in order to get away from the challenges they experienced in their early stages of life as PWVI.

However, it should also be noted that whereas an individual with Visual Impairment may possess good personality skills, there is need for the parents and teachers to guide the PWVI to make the best choices. The International Labour Organisation, (1998) emphasises the need for both the teachers and parents for example to support a child to define what will constitute work in this case. This would help in providing a better direction for the PWVI to drive towards in relation to attaining employment.

The implication of asserting ones personality especially in entering employment for PWVI in Uganda is very crucial in that even where negative attitudes towards PWD's may have been rooted, there is a ray of hope when a Person with Disability shows willingness to do an activity. Mange et al. (2001) noted that one unique feature of the Ugandan culture was that society was always willing to support any PWVI who comes up to assert themselves and as a result, they receive all the respect and support from the community. It is through such assertiveness and determination that need to be encouraged in all PWVI who are undergoing the transition process so that their transition goals can be achieved. These findings emphasise the supportive environment advocated for by the Enrichment theory.

### **Self-esteem**

Results from this study also pointed out a crucial aspect that is worth discussing. Findings revealed that self- esteem played a central role in facilitating the transition of the interviewed respondents. Respondents were quick to attribute self esteem in terms of developing a sense of belief in their potentials in terms of what they can do rather than concentrating on their challenges. I see these findings to be in line with the Enrichment Theory advanced by

Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000) which asserts that strengths rather than weaknesses should be emphasised as the point of departure in trying to overcome our challenges. Hales (1990), notes that for this to be realised, the environment in which we live plays a great role in ensuring that self-esteem is nurtured. As the findings stand therefore, the fact is that as PWVI grow up; there is always an environment of bias and negative attitudes in many spheres of life to a great extent in the Ugandan context. It requires therefore that a PWVI needs to stand out against all odds to look at themselves in a more positive way. It can be seen from the submissions of the respondents that that PWVI who stand out to defy these biases tend to complete their transition from school into work.

In some sections of the environment like in some parts of Uganda where myths, customs and beliefs determine the plight of a PWVI by asserting that their condition was a punishment for the wrongs of their parents or as a curse from the gods (Matovu, 2005), there is great need to support PWVI to overcome such attitudes. I see a connection with this aspect of variation of negative attitudes from one area to another connected with the Constructivist theory discussed by Guba et al. (1989). In the perspective of the Constructivist theory, reality is born through a process of social construction. The fact that disability is socially constructed, this means that a particular community's perception of a PWVI will determine what kind of services that community want to offer or not. It is for this reason that the self esteem of the PWVI in transition is always boosted to deal with the different constructions in the society in which they live. Support will help them improve their feeling of self worth, and as a result this will help them in their transition process. This should be the reason respondents reported it as a factor in facilitating transition.

## **Modelling**

While presenting the category of modelling as a factor that enhanced their transition, respondents reflected it in terms of admiring either their colleagues with visual impairment that were a step ahead of them or another role model brought to them at school. In addition, modelling was reflected in terms of admiring the professions of some personality like one respondent reported admiring the profession of her mother.

The implication of these findings underline the importance of having some point of reference especially from one who has achieved a step in the transition process. Such positive points of

reference greatly support those that are still undertaking the process of transition to get the encouragement and assurance that they can also make it through and attain employment.

Whereas this is a good idea, there seems not to be comprehensive services in schools enough to nurture modelling. There should be more career guidance workshops for PWVI as a means of providing models to them. As Mason et al. (2001) noted that it is sometimes very rare for PWVI to have contact with adults with Visual Impairment that have gone through the process of transition and are employed; schools should ensure that they increase such opportunities of their students to meet adults with visual impairments because of the benefits they can create in the process of transition. For instance, results indicated that even the simplest form of modelling like the one of the respondents who admitted that she was inspired by the profession of her mother; she was able to work hard at school however challenging it was. For the schools that brought some adults with visual impairment to talk to the young ones in school, respondents were quick to commend them for that service because they realised that this service had greatly inspired them in their transition from school into work.

### **Inclusive drive**

Under this finding, respondents reported that they were always working so hard to be a part of the wider population and therefore never thought of living in the world of their own as PWVI. The likely implication of such a move is that PWVI who work towards living in the wider population will have more social contacts and as a result forge acceptance and also increase on their opportunities to have more opportunities as they come.

These findings are in line with the Enrichment Theory advanced by Befring, (1990; 1997; 200). The theory advocates that all persons should associate and interact with each other regardless of their distinctive features. From this perspective, I can say that ensuring that PWVI and their distinctive feature of loss of vision interact with their sighted colleagues can yield good results as revealed by this study. Results indicated that through sharing vital aspects like information ultimately enabled PWVI attain jobs. I see a connection with these findings with what the social cultural theory advanced by Vygotsky (1978). The theory maintains that the process of lifelong development was dependent on social interaction which ultimately results into cognitive development. This implies that having had a social drive towards joining the wider society not only created opportunities for the respondents towards entering into employment for example, but also enriched their knowledge. Through sharing

with their sighted colleagues, and their willingness to work in organisations other than those of or for persons with disabilities, they were able to cope with a number of challenges.

### **Academic qualifications**

The point of having suitable academic qualifications was emphasised by PWVI as one of the things their colleagues that are still in the transition process have to take very serious. They argued that since there were many other factors that employers could use to deny them a job opportunity, this should not be on the basis of academic qualifications. One respondent emphasised that once a PWVI does not have the necessary academic qualifications, they become so vulnerable to job discrimination. They claimed that with proper academic qualifications, they were able to attain their current employment slots because the employers were satisfied with them. This is evidenced by the academic qualifications of the respondents (See table 1 page 43).

The value of education as noted by Stewart et al. (2009) when they revealed that education is a critical component of any given transition strategy, is evidenced by the fact that all the respondents had to have academic papers as a first step towards entering into employment. Table 1(ibid) indicates that all the interviewed respondents were qualified academically. This gives me hope that much as the education provided may seem to have a number of gaps, there could be something to salvage from it that can contribute to transition of PWVI from school into work. Their education will however require some reforms so that it can be comprehensive enough to enable PWVI enter into employment smoothly after work.

### **Adaptability**

I interpreted the category of adaptability from two codes given by the respondents. First, respondents said that as a PWVI, they opened up to learning new things at any time. In addition, they also said that during the process of transition particularly when it came to looking for a job, they argued that they left room for disappointments in case it arose. This implied therefore that they were able to adapt to even the hardest moments in their transition. I also see some aspect of resilience in those PWVI basing on this submission too.

The implication of adaptability to the phenomenon of transition is that a PWVI will be able to fit in any environment however challenging it may be because they will be in position to know that the process of transition is punctuated with a number of challenges. This is in line

with the Enrichment theory by Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000) when he asserts that challenges ought to be seen as opportunities rather than as problems. In addition, being willing to learn new things as part of adaptability means that they will be in position to fulfil the demands of that particular environment in which they are operating and will therefore fit in it and live in harmony especially in communities that may not be very supportive.

### **Supportive environment**

Referring to a supportive environment, respondents acknowledged that as PWVI, it was always necessary for them to get some sort of support within their environment so as to accomplish the demands of transition.

Respondents cited a supportive environment in the perspective that their workmates were supportive and also in terms of family support. These were regarded as very important pillars in ensuring a supportive environment. I realised especially that once the family was supportive enough, then PWVI would not experience many difficulties in their transition. In light of the above findings, I see a connection with what Kirk (2006) observed. Kirk, (ibid) explains that there are mainly two key factors that can boost the transition process; quality of family support, and individual input. This means that while the other parties are offering support, the PWVI also needs to show that they need the support and also use it for purposes of making transition easier. One interesting finding by this study was the fact that while PWVI acknowledged that family support was important when they were still in school they acknowledged that the family played a more passive role when it came to finding a job. This was the same with other people who had offered support to PWVI while still at school. One respondent was quoted saying,

“... at least through school, things were not as difficult as employment, because you know when you are a child and of course when you are a student, you really get a lot of support from many people. But when it comes to employment, everybody says ahaaa...! Now the tree has grown, we now need fruits from the tree.”

The above words indicate therefore that after school, PWVI are in most cases left to fend on their own in as far as looking for a job is concerned.

## **Summary of findings from objective one**

Findings revealed that respondents attributed a number of factors that enhanced their transition from school into work. These were however, dependant on a number of factors which ranged from individuals personality and the support or lack of support in the environment in which they lived. In the next section, I present findings from objective two are presented.

### **5.2.2 Objective 2: to find out barriers PWVI encounter during the process of transition from school into work**

Despite the fact that the interviewed PWVI were able to transit from school into work, evidence from the findings reveals that this did not come so easily. Time and again, they were faced with a number of barriers at various stages in their transition that could have seen them fail or lose hope in their transition efforts. Results indicated that these barriers were causing a number of challenges to PWVI in their transition efforts. The barriers identified by this study are discussed below.

#### **Limited choice of jobs**

Findings in relation to limited choice of jobs were reflected when respondents argued that while they were in school, their major focus was to go and work with organisations for PWD's after school. This was an indication that PWVI had limited choices of employment to make at the beginning. Following their disappointments of not finding jobs in the organisations for PWD's as they had earlier anticipated, they then embarked on looking for different opportunities elsewhere.

The implication of such a scenario on the transition process of PWVI is that if the other PWVI still in school have the same opinion, this will mean that they will also not be able to make it through into the formal employment sector if they get disappointed with not finding employment in those organisations for PWD's. This is because these organisations may not have the capacity to employ all PWVI that manage to complete school.

Whereas there are a number of existing laws concerning employment of PWD's in general, they have not been operationalised to facilitate their entry into the employment sector. The

Constitution of Uganda (1995) for instance in Article 13 Employment of Persons with Disability section (i) emphasises that Persons with Disabilities have a right to practice their professions and to carry any lawful occupation, trade, or business of their choice. Whereas there have been some achievements brought about by these laws, a lot more is still desired. This is because PWVI continue to be segregated by employers because of different prejudices (Baguwemu et al. 2008).

In another perspective however, this study realises that there are very few government jobs that would accommodate PWVI after school. The type of economy pursued by Uganda is a liberal economy. The private sector has taken over most government parastatals through its privatisation policy. The requirements that the private sector demands from their employees is product based and only look forward to maximising profits in whatever they do. In the same line, one respondent was quoted saying;

*“This is a world of competition ... this I must say... it’s no longer a world of like ... may be affirmative action, no! No! People want merit. When you come to an organisation like United Growers Union (Pseudo name), yes, they are willing to employ you but on the basis that you have the necessary grades.”*

With such changes in the dynamics of employment, it is no longer all about service delivery as a chore. In such cases where employers may perceive that PWVI may not be able to maximise production, their chances of attaining employment are limited.

### **Limited work experience**

This study revealed the barrier of limited work experience when the respondents revealed that they were never taken on directly into employment after school because they were required to have some work experience in order to be taken into employment. This proved to be a challenge for them to enter into employment.

The implication of such a situation in relation to transition is that PWVI have to spend more time and resources looking for where to find placement that could help them attain some sort of work experience. This means that PWVI will take much longer time than their ordinary peers with sight might take to accomplish the process of transition. The time taken while looking for jobs is just in addition to the time and stress they may have encountered while still in school.



I see these findings similar to those reported by Mason, et al. (2001) when they revealed that PWVI are usually limited to opportunities for having direct experiences of the world of work since they usually have limited access to part time jobs. In line with the above observations, Mange, et al. (2001) in their study also observed that whereas there was widespread traditional belief that PWVI were cursed or bewitched, this belief was strengthened by some practical reasons that could be attributed to the limitation of their participation in activities in their environment. The fears that they could be injured or get lost were very strong. These findings could be an indication of the reasons PWVI are not taken on for part time jobs where they could earn some work experience before joining their professions after work. Such fears among the employers need to be alleviated if PWVI are to be given the opportunities to take on the jobs of their choice.

### **Information barrier**

I derived this category of information barrier from the respondents' comments when they reported that many of them depended on colleagues for job related information. Their sighted colleagues who would read the printed job advertisements in the media provided them the information they needed.

The implication of such a barrier to the transition process is the fact that the information they get may not be timely. The fact that they are depending on someone for the information could lead them to miss out on opportunities that others may not have bothered to read through. This leaves them more vulnerable. Such a situation arises from the fact that other forms of media like the internet which can be readily accessed by PWVI are not yet accessible to all of them.

These findings are in line with Mason et al. (2001) who also noted that limitation of access to information about job opportunities is a great barrier towards attaining employment.

Overcoming this barrier through having information from their sighted colleagues seems to have played a great role. Although this way of accessing information was good enough to enable them overcome the barrier of lack of access to information, efforts should be made to ensure a more independent way of accessing information without having to rely on the mercy of other individuals. This does not mean however, that contact with their sighted colleagues for information should be eliminated once their ability to find information independently is enhanced. Their ability to find information independently will only increase their chances of

looking for the necessary job opportunities that exist and where and whenever they need it. This will mean that they have a wider base of information. Information from their colleagues will be to augment what they have had already or used for purposes of clarification.

### **Old technology**

Findings revealed that most of the respondents were only able to have access to machines that would not match the modern technology. None of them for instance owned a computer before they entered into their current employment yet the work that they were about to do required the use of computers. Perhaps what some of them attained during their voluntary services was the attainment of computer knowledge that they claim boosted them at their places of work.

These findings are in consonance with those found by Mange et al. (2001) where they asserted that PWVI in Uganda entered the field of employment when they are disadvantaged by lesser technical skills. This kind of situation could be a result of the expensive modern technological equipment like the computers and the programmes that can enhance their use for PWVI. This barrier needs to be readily addressed if PWVI are to register a smooth transition from school into work.

### **Transition being unpredictable**

Under the above category, respondents reported that transition was full of a mixture of excitements, expectations, as well as disappointments. They also argued that while they were in school, they were getting some kind of support but when it came to finding a job, they reported that there was virtually no support.

The likely cause for PWVI to perceive the process of transition as unpredictable can be attributed to the lack of Transition Planning which the International Labour Office (1998) recommends. Perhaps, the implication of such a feeling of unpredictability could be a leading cause for many PWVI to lose hope in their studies and the entire transition process. Transition planning should therefore be emphasised so that the process of transition becomes more predictable. Greve, (2002) had similar findings when she reported that PWVI faced a barrier of insufficient personal and vocational training coupled with insufficient career planning. This means that by the time the PWVI has to enter employment, they are not so certain of the forces in the labour market and in particular their destiny.

According to results, cultural bias also seems to have caused a dichotomy in the employment opportunities drawn between the rural and urban areas. Evidence from data revealed that most of the respondents were not having formal employment opportunities in the rural areas where they were born. These findings are in confirmation of an earlier study by Mange et al, (2001) who noted that PWVI in rural areas were limited to trades within their cultural boundaries. If the community depends on agriculture for example, then the PWVI will be limited to that sort of job.

Formal employment opportunities for PWVI seem to be present in urban areas and this may leave PWVI that have not got the chance to go to urban areas to remain at a disadvantage. Had the existing policies been operationalised for example, then transition of PWVI in any part of Uganda would have been smoother.

### **Summary**

In the above objective, a number of barriers were reported. Whereas there a number of barriers in school, it seems most barriers for PWVI in transition relate to entering into a job. There seems to be lesser support in terms of entry into employment by PWVI than in school. In the next section data from objective three were presented.

### **5.2.3 Objective Three:**

#### **To obtain suggestions from employed PWVI about some of the helpful approaches of entering a job after school**

A number of suggestions were put forward by respondents on what should be done to make the process of transition for PWVI better. These are discussed below.

#### **Seek work experience**

As earlier noted in the discussion that most of the respondents attributed their success of entering a job to having attained work experience through voluntary opportunities they sought from different organisations, they were quick to advise their colleagues to emulate them. They urged them to take up voluntary services in their areas of interest so that they are able to gain the much needed work experience which can lead them to attain employment in return.

## **Being resilient**

In addition to seeking work experience, being resilient was reflected as another way to manage the transition process when the respondents urged their colleagues still in the transition process never to give up easily despite the challenges and also endure to begin in the smallest way say with little salary.

## **Creativity**

A study by Baguwemu et al. (2008) recommended the formal employment sector as the ideal form of employment for PWVI because they would be guaranteed a salary. This study had the same line of thinking. However, while advising their fellow PWVI still in the transition process, respondents acknowledged that not all of the PWVI might have the opportunity to enter into the formal employment sector. They urged their fellow colleagues still in transition to be creative and create their own jobs other than relying on finding jobs in the formal sector that may not come so easily. For those that manage to get employment in the formal sector, they were advised to try to make use of the machines they find in place instead of waiting to have the machines they need that may not come in time. I see a connection with these findings with the two factors Kirk, (2006) notes that are the key factors that can boost the transition process; quality of family support, and individual input. In this regard, individual input can be equated to what the respondents regarded as creativity.

## **Positive living**

First of all, respondents revealed that it was vital for a PWVI to live positively in whatever they do. Acceptance of the disability and knowing that one to live with the disability of visual impairment for the rest of their life was stressed as a fundamental step towards building confidence and focus to ones studies and career. They also stated positive living in terms of overcoming low self esteem and ensuring confidence coupled with the zeal to try out all opportunities as they come.

The implication of these findings to the process of transition will be that PWVI will have to concentrate and remain focused on what they have to do if they are to register a smooth transition. The fact that the Enrichment theory by Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000) intends to look at challenges as opportunities is in agreement with these results. This is because respondents felt that putting aside the challenges of visual impairment and concentrate on the actual

demands of transition would be a great way to deal with the challenges of transition. Particularly the fact that they assert that

### **Efficiency**

Efficiency was reflected in terms of working hard and being able to transfer knowledge gained at school into the employment sector. In the same light, Sacks et al. (1998) assert that one of the objectives of providing education to PWVI at the Instructional level of providing support should be able to ensure that learners with Visual Impairment are able to transfer knowledge into their real life situation. This implies that applicability of knowledge of whatever type should be the gist of providing that education.

The implication of this scenario is that the academic skills provided should be those that enable PWVI to be practical. Such skills as practicability were credited as one of the ways in which respondents were able to succeed.

### **Quick to adapt**

Respondents discussed flexibility in terms of being able to adapt to new environments and new life, being open minded in terms of thinking, being able to embrace new ideas, and giving room to disappointment when it arose. In such situations where PWVI were able to remain focused while meeting different challenges in their transition could be another reflection of the Enrichment theory by Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000) which advances the idea of looking at challenges as a resource rather than as a problem. The fact that PWVI were able to adapt to such demands they were facing in the new environments, the new demands may have been catalyst for the coping strategies they attained. They seem to have used it as a turning point for even working harder. Such a positive way of looking at challenges as opportunities is one reason the Enrichment theory may play a central role especially in the field of Special Needs Education were individuals with disabilities and in particular those with Visual Impairments are faced with a number of challenges.

### **Team work**

It was revealed that teamwork was one of the key routes towards registering a smooth transition into work. While at work or at school, teamwork was seen as the best way of

producing better results in that when PWVI teamed up with their colleagues without visual impairment, they were in position to support each other in order to attain the set goals.

The implication of embracing team work therefore signifies a good development in transition from school into work. When there is compliment for each other's actions, it is likely to give satisfaction to each other regardless, and also ensure the attainment of the set goals. The Enrichment Theory affirms this idea of team work when it asserts that variations should be seen as enriching in facilitating peer learning. For the workmates for instance in those organisations I visited, it was evident that they had learnt from the presence of a PWVI by the way they were collaborating. Such examples should therefore be embraced as models that will see a great improvement in the way PWVI transit from school into work.

I see a strong connection of teamwork with another tenet of the Enrichment Theory Befring, (1990; 1997; 2000) as the theory asserts that when the right conditions are set in a supportive environment, there is satisfaction from both the individuals who are vulnerable and the others without disabilities. For instance at organisational level, when there is teamwork, it is expected that there will be satisfaction when the set goals are achieved regardless of who has contributed as long as one is able to have some input towards achieving these goals.

Team work is also in line with Sacks et al. (1998) who argue that a successful transition from school into work is basically dependent on social skills and how the PWVI learns to get along with others. In case the respondents had no social skills however, then it would be hard to enhance team work. The aspect of team work should therefore be developed right from home into school which will ultimately be key in their lives after school.

### **5.3 Unanticipated findings**

Interestingly, this study discovered that there was no structured practice in schools to take care of transition planning for the respondents that this study interviewed. This seemed to pose a big challenge in that PWVI came out of school without proper knowledge of what the employment demands are like the need to have some work related experience in order to enter into employment. It seems therefore that PWVI who come from school and are not able to get this work related experience have not been able to register a smooth transition from school into employment. The teaching that is based on professional logic instead of learning logic as

observed by Befring, (2000) seems to be affecting PWVI especially as they leave school to join work. As Befring also notes that learning has been greatly decontextualised in that it has been cut off from the environments where the people leave, work and do things, this could be the leading factor that led the respondents to get into the real contexts where work is done.

Evidence from this study therefore shows that when PWVI are exposed to the right teaching, they are able to perform well in the formal employment sector where they are usually denied the chance. These gaps in the education system and the existing laws need to be addressed therefore if the plight of PWVI is to improve for the better.

Since a transition plan has to be planned by both parents and the PWVI, it emerged from the studies that on many occasions one of the parents would deny the child with Visual Impairment. Respondents noted that it was usually the fathers that deny their obligations of looking after their children with visual impairment.

Therefore, planning and taking care for PWVI in a family where there is little harmony among the parents makes planning for the transition process even more complex. Such biases still need concerted efforts to address them so as to avert their effects on the transition from school into work for PWVI. If it is not addressed, the cycle will continue because it may be the same person that the PWVI in transition will have to ask a job from.

## **5.4 Personal reflections on the research process**

Initially, I thought that analysing data from five cases would be a simple task, but there was a big challenge when it came to transcribing the data and also in terms of analysing them. Analysing data was a challenge in that it was at times it was very difficult to develop sub-categories, but most of all developing the categories which would later be used as summarising statements for the data. However, with continued re-reading of the data, the sub-categories and categories were formed.

## **5.5 Recommendations for future action**

Data revealed that the teaching of Mathematics was poorly executed in schools and as a result it greatly affected PWVI in their transition efforts in that it affected their grading. Many of

them reported having got lower academic grades than they ought to have got if they had passed Mathematics. This study therefore recommends a re-training of all teachers of Mathematics for PWVI so that they are able to have better approaches towards the teaching of Mathematics. In return, better teaching of Mathematics to PWVI would enable them compete favourably with their sighted colleagues in their transition efforts from school into work. This should also be complimented by government equipping all schools for PWVI with all the necessary equipment needed for the proper teaching of Mathematics to PWVI.

Secondly, due to the importance of modern technology, computer knowledge and skills should be an integral part of the secondary school syllabus to begin with or even at the primary level for those that can afford it. This would increase on the access to information of PWVI and as a result enhance more independent living and attainment of work. In the same line, this would be a great boost for PWVI in allowing them compete favourable in the employment sector on completion of school as it has been found out by this study that possession of computer skills can be of great help for a PWVI to execute their duties.

Further still, as it was evidenced by this study that there seems to be little or no formal transition planning in schools for PWVI, this study thus recommends that transition planning be an integral part of the curriculum for PWVI. This should be done by ensuring that all the stake holders; parents, teachers, social workers, potential employers, and PWVI themselves discuss together so that they can have a focus on what the employment prospects for PWVI could be like in future. This would give PWVI a chance to develop work experience with their potential employers through internships. Work experience will be very crucial in ensuring that PWVI attain employment because this study found out that lack of work experience by PWVI posed a great barrier towards their attainment of employment. The demands of the job market and the bottlenecks they have to beat should be discussed and solutions will be got before they practically enter into the field of work.

This study further observed too that whereas Uganda had locally developed a number of laws concerning employment and also ratified a number of international laws, there seems to be laxity in the willingness of government to operationalise them. Specifically, if there is affirmative action in accessing education, then there should be affirmative action in terms of attaining employment too. Such affirmative policies would see to it that those PWVI that have been catered for in terms of affirmative action in school are also accommodated in formal gainful employment.



## **5.6 Recommendations for future studies**

Since this study only focused on perceived experiences by PWVI who had transitioned from school into work, it was not possible to capture the views of those PWVI that had not transitioned from school into work. This study therefore recommends that a comparative study be carried out in future to analyse the views of PWVI that were not able to transit from school into work so that a comprehensive study with both versions can be obtained. This will lead to having a wealth of information in the area of transition for PWVI in Uganda. This should be done on a large scale for purposes of generalising the findings. Thus, the use of mixed methods that is both qualitative and quantitative methods would be highly recommended.

In addition, as this study was only limited to studying perceived experiences by PWVI who had transitioned from school into work, it therefore recommended that other stake holders like teachers, employers, parents, and policy makers should be involved in a comprehensive study that would give a multifaceted picture which will thus give a holistic impression on the general factors influencing and those that hinder transition of PWVI from school into work.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This study concludes its findings by noting that whereas the process of transition is difficult for PWVI, it is possible to realise with the support needed from different stake holders. As the enrichment theory suggests that everyone in their uniqueness has a complimentary role to play, PWVI equally have potentials that their sighted counterparts may not possess. In the perspective of the enrichment theory, transition for PWVI from school can only become problematic if we try to match everybody to fit in the same learning methods, activities, and in this case employment related activities. This means that all stakeholders in the realm of transition for PWVI should endeavour to eliminate the notion of one size fits all in terms of considering PWVI for employment and in other activities.

In terms of laws and legislation, there is need for operationalising most of the existing laws in Uganda so that the unique features of PWVI can be enhanced by taking them on into the formal employment sector.



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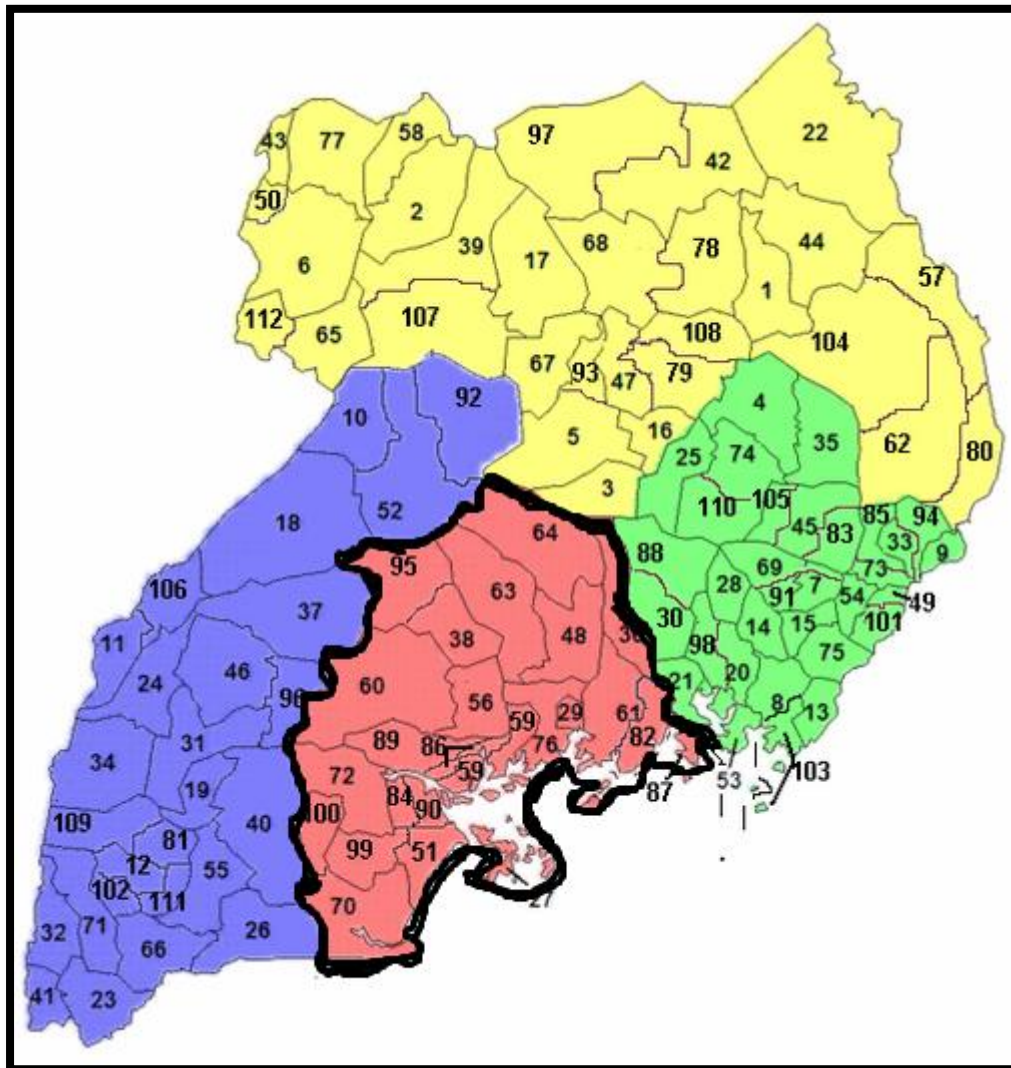
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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Map of Uganda showing Area of Study



Source: Wikipedia, the free online Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012

KEY:  Area of study- Central Region of Uganda.

## Appendix 2: Introductory letter from the University of Oslo

**UiO : Faculty of Educational Sciences**  
University of Oslo

Date: 19 September 2011  
Your ref.:  
Our ref.: int./2011 SW/db

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that **MUGABI, Fred Nsumikambi**, date of birth 14.10.1975, is a full-time student pursuing a course of study at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo, Norway, leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education (M. Phil. SNE).

This is a continuous two-year programme run on the "sandwich" principle, which involves periods of study and field work/research in both Norway and the home country. The student has successfully completed both the first and second semester of the initial study period in Norway and is now working on the collection of data and the writing of a thesis during the autumn semester 2011. This involves a period of field work in Uganda. The student will return to Norway at the beginning of January 2012 and the period of study will be completed at the end of May 2012 in Norway.

The main responsibility for supervising the research, developmental work and thesis remains with the Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, Norway. However, we would kindly request that the relevant authorities give the student the access required to the schools and educational establishments necessary in order to undertake field work and research. We would also be most grateful for any assistance that is afforded to the student which enables him to carry out this work, particularly the use of facilities such as access to telephone, fax, e-mail, computer services and libraries at the various educational establishments.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Siri Wormnæs

Academic Head of International Master's Programme

Department of Special Needs Education

Officer in charge:

*Denese Brittain*

(+ 47) 22 85 80 75, [d.a.brittain@isp.uio.no](mailto:d.a.brittain@isp.uio.no)



**The Department of Special Needs Education (DSNE)**  
Postal addr.: PO Box 1140 Blindern, 0318 Oslo  
Visiting addr.: Helga Engs hus, 4. etasje, Sem Sælands vei 7, 0371 Oslo

Phone: (+47) 22 85 80 59  
Telefax: (+47) 22 85 80 21  
[postmottak@uv.uio.no](mailto:postmottak@uv.uio.no)  
[www.uv.uio.no/isp/](http://www.uv.uio.no/isp/)  
Org. no.: 971 035 854

## **Appendix 3: Interview guide for employed PWVI**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPLOYED PERSONS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

#### **Background Information**

1. Can you please tell me about yourself  
Probe for -age  
-history of loss of sight  
-residual vision (shape ..... colour..... light perception.....  
Light projection ..... )
2. What is your educational background?  
-types of schools attended.....  
-duration at each level of education.....

#### **Job related information**

3. Can you please tell me about your job management  
-job description (what it is).....  
-how did you get into the job? .....  
-how did you get information about the job? .....  
-special equipment needed to execute the job.....  
-special Braille equipment possessed prior to attaining the job .....

#### **Transitioning into work**

4. What type of help if any did you get from anybody, individual or organisation when transitioning from school into work?  
(Probe for help from)  
-government .....  
-blind association.....  
-family.....  
-friends.....  
-any other.....
5. What do you have to say about the support?  
(Probe for)  
-sufficiency.... (Not sufficient at all, not sufficient, sufficient, a lot)  
-timeliness  
-tagging (strings attached)

6. In your opinion, what facilitated you to transit from school into work?

.....

7. From your own experience, how was the process of transition from school into work?

(Probe for)

-likes about the process.....

-dislikes.....

-ease.....

-challenges.....

8. From your experience, what advice would you give to persons with visual impairment (Blind) towards taking up a job? .....

.....  
.....

## **Appendix 4: Informed written consent to respondents**

### **INFORMED WRITTEN CONSENT TO RESPONDENTS**

Dear Respondent,

I am Mugabi Fred Nsumikambi, a student at the **University of Oslo- Norway** pursuing a Masters of Philosophy in Special Needs Education. I am currently in Uganda to carry out a research study as one of the requirements for the award of a Masters degree.

My Research problem seeks to find out what persons with visual impairment perceive as factors that influence their transition from school into work.

The responses given will only be used for purposes of this study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality, with no association made to your name, or your place of work during the project and after it has been published in the final Thesis in April 2012. Respondents will be referred to by pseudo names, i.e. Respondent P, Q, R, S... For purposes of recording the right data, our voices during the interview session(s) will be recorded but will be deleted as soon as the project has ended.

The reason for carrying out this study is to help persons with visual impairment in their efforts to transit from school into work.

My humble request is to ask you to take part in this twenty minute interview by answering the questions as frankly as possible. On the other hand, you may chose not to participate or even withdraw voluntarily at any time without explaining why.

Thank you for taking part in the study. I once again re- assure you of utmost confidentiality in this process.

Yours faithfully,

**Mugabi Fred Nsumikambi**

Masters Student

Department of Special Needs Education

University of Oslo

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*If you have any concerns or questions with regard to the above, please do not hesitate to call me on Mobile +256781477751 or on e-mail: **mugabifrednm@yahoo.com***

## Consent

I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have also read the information sheet.

I understand that:

- There will be utmost confidentiality in the information that I provide.
- Any information that could identify me will not be disclosed during the course of the study and in the research report or to any other party.
- It was voluntary to take part in this study.
- I can choose not to take part in some or all the project.
- I have the freedom to withdraw at any given time without prior explanation and without being punished or disadvantaged in any way.

Name\_\_\_\_\_ (Optional)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

*If you have any concerns or questions with regard to the above, please do not hesitate to call me on Mobile +256781477751 or on e-mail: [mugabifrednm@yahoo.com](mailto:mugabifrednm@yahoo.com)*



## **Appendix 5: Informed written consent to Uganda National Association of the Blind (UNAB)**

**12.09.2011**

**The Director,  
Uganda National Association of the Blind,  
P. O Box 6938, Kampala.**

Dear Sir,

### **RE: REQUEST FOR IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS**

In reference to the above subject, I humbly submit my request to your office for assistance in identifying and contacting potential research interview respondents.

I am **Mugabi Fred Nsumikambi**, a student at the **University of Oslo –Norway** pursuing a Masters of Philosophy Degree in Special Needs Education. I am required to carry out a research study, preferably in my home country, which will be submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirement for the award of a Masters of Philosophy degree in Special Needs Education.

My research Topic is **“Perceived experiences by persons with visual impairment when transitioning from school into work.”** The study aims at establishing the factors that influence the transition of persons with visual impairment (Blind) from school into work. It is envisaged that the information provided will be used in helping persons with visual impairment in their efforts to transit from school into work.

I have therefore contacted you so that you can be kind enough and contact possible study participants who need to;

- Be Braille users, with Braille as their first written language and are above 18 years.
- Be persons who are blind with no additional disabilities.
- Have been in school, and are in a job.
- Be four in number, comprising two female and two male.
- Be living around [REDACTED]

The chosen participants will be treated with utmost confidentiality with no name, or place of work associated to their information when published in the final Research Thesis. This will be done by referring to participants using pseudo names, i.e. Respondent P, Q, R, and S.

For purposes of recording the right data, our voices during our interview session(s) will be recorded, but will be deleted as soon as the project has ended.

Participants will also have the freedom to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time without giving any explanation and will not be punished or disadvantaged in any way. I shall be very grateful on receiving support from your office in this regard.

Mugabi Fred Nsumikambi

## Appendix 6: Permission from Norway

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald Hårfagres gate 29  
N-5007 Bergen  
Norway  
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17  
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50  
nsd@nsd.uib.no  
www.nsd.uib.no  
Org.nr: 985 321 884

Toro Teigum Graven  
Institutt for spesialpedagogikk  
Universitetet i Oslo  
Postboks 1140 Blindern  
0318 OSLO

Vår dato: 30.04.2012

Vår ref: 27768 / 4

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### STATUS FOR BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

27768      *Perceived Experiences by Persons with Visual Impairment when transitioning from School into Work. A Case Study of four Persons with Visual Impairment that have remained unemployed*

Vi viser til tidligere innsendt meldeskjema for forskningsprosjekt som medfører meldeplikt eller konsesjonsplikt. Videre vises det til vårt svarbrev hvor det gikk frem at vi ville ta kontakt ved prosjektslutt angående prosjektets status.

Ifølge våre opplysninger skal prosjektet nå være avsluttet. Personvernombudet for forskning ber om en tilbakemelding på hvorvidt datamaterialet er anonymisert.

Dersom data ikke er anonymisert og det fortsatt er behov for oppbevaring av personopplysninger, må prosjektleder gi en redekjørelse til personvernombudet for hvorfor data ikke kan anonymiseres på nåværende tidspunkt. Denne tilbakemeldingen er nødvendig for at prosjektleder skal ha lovlig grunnlag for behandling av personopplysninger.

NSD arkiverer forskningsdata for fremtidig bruk. Hensikten med arkivordningen er først og fremst å styrke datagrunnlaget for norsk forskning. Forskningsdata representerer en verdifull kilde til informasjon både for samtidsforskning og historisk forskning.

Dersom lagring av data ved NSD er ønskelig ber personvernombudet om at data og tilhørende dokumentasjon sendes til dataarkivering@nsd.no. Vi viser til våre [nettsider](#) for ytterligere informasjon om arkiveringstjenesten. Forskere som gjennomfører forskningsprosjekt med støtte fra Norges forskningsråd (NFR) minnes om at arkivering ved NSD er et kontraktsvilkår for den gitte støtte (dersom data er egnet for arkivering ved NSD).

Vi ber om elektronisk tilbakemelding på status for behandling av personopplysninger ved å bruke linken i medfølgende epost, innen 3 uker. Dersom noe er uklart ta gjerne kontakt over telefon.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Pernilla Bollman

Kopi: Fred Nsumikambi Mugabi, Olav M Troviks vei 10 HO104, 0864 OSLO

## Appendix 7: Snellen chart

<b>E</b>	1	20/200
<b>F P</b>	2	20/100
<b>T O Z</b>	3	20/70
<b>L P E D</b>	4	20/50
<b>P E C F D</b>	5	20/40
<b>E D F C Z P</b>	6	20/30
<b>F E L O P Z D</b>	7	20/25
<b>D E F P O T E C</b>	8	20/20
<b>L E F O D P C T</b>	9	
<b>F D P L T C E O</b>	10	
<b>P E Z O L C F T D</b>	11	

Source: *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*